

ILLUSTRATED TIMES

REGISTERED AT THE GENERAL POST OFFICE FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

NEW SERIES.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION AND REPRODUCING ILLUSTRATIONS IS RESERVED.

No. 510—VOL. V.

LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1864.

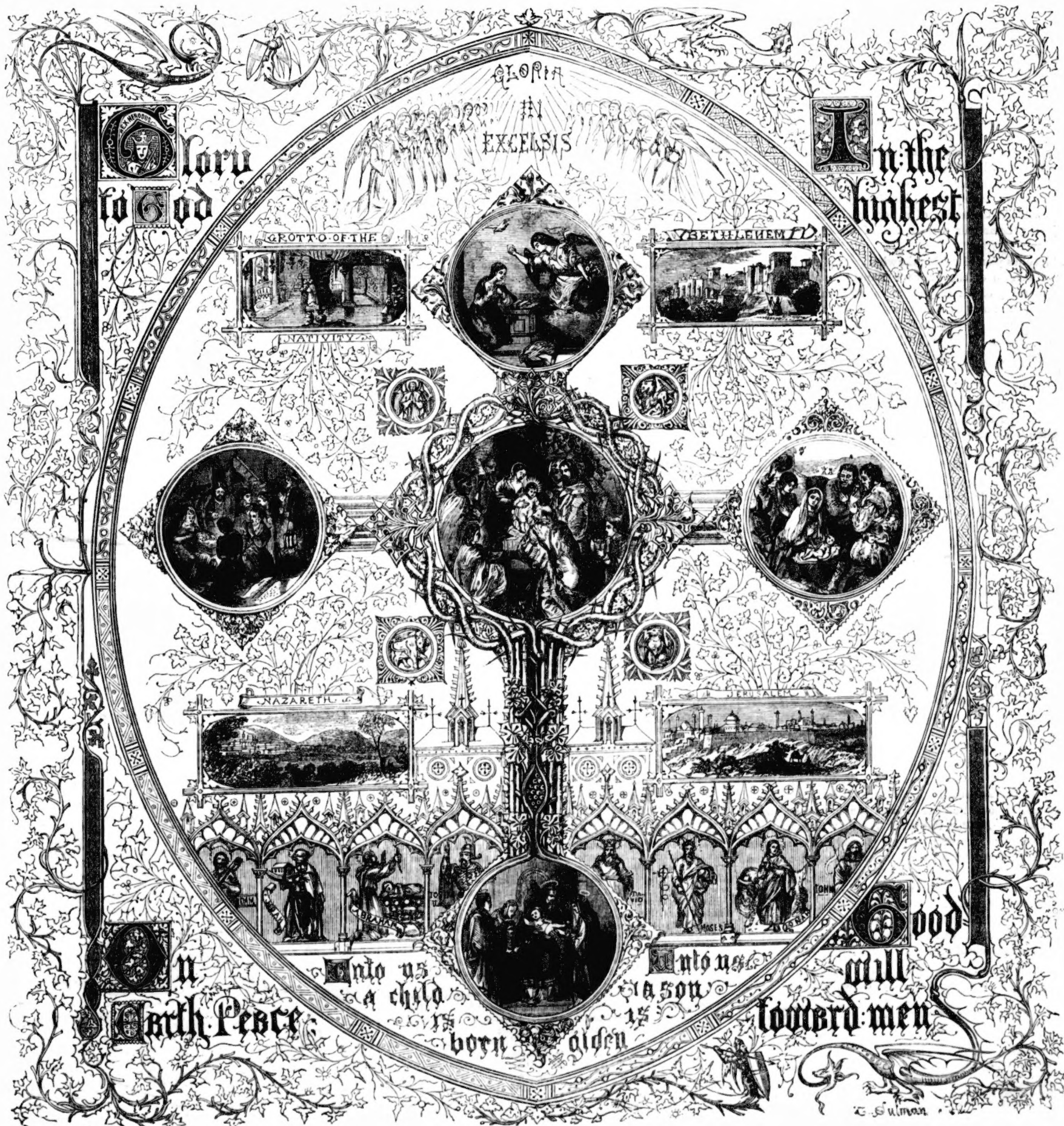
PRICE [WITH CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT] 4½D.—STAMPED, 5½D.

TOPICS OF THE DAY.

In the course of next year a wholesale canonisation is to take place at Rome. In other words, an attempt is to be made to stimulate the Catholic world to action—or, at least, remonstrance—on behalf of the Temporal Power. We have no news from Italy more important than this. Letters from

Berlin give an account of a sort of semi-burlesque triumphal entry made by the regiments of the Guard into the Prussian capital, amid the acclamations of the inhabitants, who have been taught to believe that the dismemberment of Denmark was only accomplished after a series of the most heroic exploits on the part of the Prussian army.

By the last news from America, General Sherman appeared to be running amuck. There was no saying in what direction he would next march, but his progress was marked by devastation wherever he went, and it was thought that he must be making for the seacoast. It is certain that he cannot retrace his steps; and unless he succeed in reaching



"THE NATIVITY"—(DRAWN BY T. SULMAN.)

the Atlantic and embarking his troops his position will, in all probability, be very like that of Napoleon during the retreat from Moscow.

Perhaps the most remarkable portion of Mr. Lincoln's Message is that which relates to the financial position. Mr. Cobden, in his last speech, did a little sum to prove that the finances of the North were by no means in a deplorable state, and that the expenses of the Federal Government during the present war were not greater than those of our own Government in time of peace. This calculation, however, was based on the uncomplimentary assumption that the Federal Treasury has already resolved not to redeem its obligations at par, and that a paper dollar is already held by the financial secretary to be worth only a fraction of a dollar. However this may be, the Secretary of the Treasury estimates that the debt at the close of the fiscal year will amount to upwards of 2,500,000,000 dols.; and it can no more be argued that a dollar owed by the Federal Government is in general estimation not worth much more than a third of a dollar than an insolvent trader could plead that for every pound of his debts his creditors would be glad to take a shilling, and therefore that he did not owe so many pounds, but only so many shillings. Whatever it may mean to pay, it is very evident that the Federal Government will owe in July next upwards of five hundred millions sterling, with probably a considerable sum in addition in the shape of unsettled claims, arrears of pay, and other charges; and in face of this alarming fact it is not astonishing that the Secretary of the Treasury should propose not only increased taxation, but the sale of the public domain, especially that portion of it which contains precious metals. Mr. Lincoln, however, does not seem inclined to make himself unpopular by levying such an amount of taxation as could enable him to carry on the war on something like ready-money principles. He has a scheme of his own. He suggests that "a limited amount of some future issue of public securities might be held by any bona fide purchaser exempt from taxation and from seizure for debt, under such restrictions and limitations as might be necessary to guard against abuse of so important a privilege." We do not know how this proposition to create a privileged class in America will be received; but there are, probably, a large number of Americans who will be tempted by the possibility of getting money settled inalienably upon themselves, and who will like the notion of eating, drinking, speculating, and enjoying themselves without fear of either taxgatherers or creditors.

Mr. Lincoln's plan of raising the wind is evidently borrowed from the scheme of the Emperor Napoleon, who aims at getting as many of his subjects as possible among his creditors, so that as many of them as possible may feel interested in maintaining the existing political system. This Napoleonic idea is very popular just now, and we see that a domestic loan on the true Napoleonic principle has just been effected in Russia.

The suppression of a large number of monasteries and the confiscation of a considerable amount of Church property in Poland must be regarded as very important measures; for the Russian Government has taken the trouble to publish a pamphlet on the subject and to appoint an agent in London for its sale. The pamphlet in question is said to be merely a chapter from a very copious work on the subject of the Polish insurrection in general, which, like General Todleben's "History of the Crimean War," is to be brought out in four different languages. As regards the suppression of the monasteries, all the Russian Government has to say is that the monks, having assisted their countrymen during the late insurrection, are now being punished for their offence. This is quite intelligible. Russia has once more gained the victory over the Poles; and, not having spared the Polish laity, why should it allow the Polish clergy to escape?

At the conclusion of the ukase suppressing the monasteries in Poland, it is stated that the funds obtained from the confiscation of the monasterial property will be devoted to public instruction. This sounds well, and will reconcile a certain number of British bigots to what at first sight must appear to everyone a most unjust and tyrannical measure. The Russian Government wishes to abolish superstition and to spread enlightenment! This is all very well as a declared intention; but, as a matter of fact, the Catholic clergy civilised Poland, while Russia has not yet been civilised by any system of secular instruction, still less by its own clergy, whose ranks are recruited, almost exclusively, from the lowest and most ignorant classes. Besides, this is not the first time that the Russians have seized property belonging to Polish monasteries. The same thing was done in the Polish provinces incorporated with the Russian empire (though not in the so-called "kingdom of Poland") after the insurrection of 1830, and it was stated then, as now, that the money derived from the plunder would be devoted to educational purposes. Nevertheless although two Universities and several "high schools" were abolished, not one school of any kind was founded.

LORD PALMERSTON.—The political life of Lord Palmerston has been longer than that of any statesman of the present century at home or abroad. That of Prince Metternich lasted fifty-four years, from 1794 to 1848; that of Count Nesselrode also the same number of years—namely, from 1802 to 1856; that of the Duke of Wellington little more than forty-five years, dating from the time when he was Chief Secretary in Dublin to his death; that of Sir Robert Peel even less still. But Lord Palmerston entered the House of Commons in 1806, and has held office, with very slight intermissions, since 1807, or seven years more than half a century.

A SAILOR'S LOVE OF FAIR PLAY.—In a shipyard in Pembroke the other day, a tar from a man-of-war was observed watching two men dragging a seven-foot cross-cut saw through a huge oak log. The saw was dull, the log very tough, and there they went, saw-saw, saw-saw; pull, push; pull, push. Jack studied the matter over a while, until he came to the conclusion that they were pulling to see who would get the saw; and as one was an immense big chap while the other was a little fellow, he decided to see fair play; so, giving the big one a blow under the ear that capsize him, he jerked the saw out of the log and, giving it the small one, he sung out, "Now run, you beggar!"

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

It was winter of the calendar,
But up in heaven was cheer:
"Go, Gabriel, carry and set the star
To call the people near."

Is this the Babe, is this the King,
Among the oxen hiding?
But around his head is a golden ring,
A glory there abiding.

A ship came sailing over-sea,
A Cross the sail adorning;
Two ships came sailing, fair and free,
On Christmas in the morning.

Three ships came sailing in-under the lea;
The Angels heard the story;
But where's the star for you and me?
Where's the golden glory?

The star was then, the star's to-day,
The star will shine to-morrow;
Come, Wisdom, up from far, and pay
Gifts at the shrine of Sorrow!

The glory glows, the glory grows,
The glory flows for ever;
In a golden round the current flows—
We dwell beside the river.

Thereon in a boat doth an Angel float,
Who gives when he seems to borrow;
Your hearts uplift, he brings a gift
To-day and again to-morrow.

Miserere, Domine!
Dark bends the aisle, the mourners pray:
Fair shines the sun, the shadows flee:
In excelsis gloria! W. B. RANDS.

Foreign Intelligence.

FRANCE.

A rumour was current in Paris last week which caused a considerable degree of agitation, and bodes ill for the much-talked-of extension of political freedom. A scheme is said to be contemplated by the Government by which the ten electoral districts of Paris would be relieved from the task of choosing members to represent them in the Corps Legislatif. This grand object, which would virtually disfranchise the capital, is to be achieved by the Crown assuming to itself the right of nominating the deputies, as it already does in the case of the members of the municipal Council.

SPAIN.

The Spanish Ministerial crisis has been brought to a close by the recall of General Narvaez and his entire Cabinet, the attempt of General Isturitz to construct a new Administration, as well as others, having proved abortive.

ITALY.

The Pope has issued a Bull condemning all modern and religious and political errors having a tendency hostile to the Catholic Church, and exhorting the Bishops to confute them. The Bull, which was signed on the 8th of October last, was drawn up by a committee of theologians, under the presidency of Cardinal Ciceroni.

The Court of Cassation at Naples has rejected the appeal of the brigand La Gala and his accomplices.

GREECE.

The Greek Government is again threatened with a crisis. The Foreign Minister has resigned, and his successor has been appointed. The Paris papers publish despatches from Messina which report that disturbances had broken out in Zante from political causes, and that several persons had been wounded.

CHINA AND JAPAN.

A brief telegram from Suez states that the news from China is unsatisfactory, and that the rebels had appeared in the vicinity of Amoy and stopped trade. The intelligence from Japan is favourable. Sir Rutherford Alcock's return to England is much regretted by English residents.

THE CIVIL WAR IN AMERICA.

WAR NEWS.

We have news from New York to the 10th instant.

The accounts as to Sherman's progress are very contradictory. Some reports place him within six miles of Savannah. The latest accounts, however, and those which seem most likely to be true, are to the effect that with his main army he had passed Millen, and was making for Darien, a place at the mouth of the Altamaha River, in Georgia, where there is good anchorage for a fleet, and where we believe the Federals have a position. The only fighting which had taken place had been between the cavalry and advance guards of Sherman and the enemy, in which the former were defeated—that is, according to the Southern reports. An attack was made upon Macon on the 20th, and some success achieved at first, but eventually the Federals were repulsed. Richmond papers report Sherman hemmed in by peril. His cavalry had again been defeated at Sandersville. The citizens of Milledgeville have petitioned the authorities at Macon to send them bread. Great distress everywhere prevails along Sherman's line of march, the destruction being almost universal. Savannah was being strongly garrisoned as precautionary, though an attack was not generally anticipated. Augusta papers of the 1st report that the railways damaged by Sherman were being rapidly repaired, and that telegraphic communication with Millen had been re-established. Sherman's track was marked by slain soldiers, dead animals, and abandoned material. A Federal expedition under Foster, which moved inland from Port Royal on the 30th of November to meet Sherman, had been defeated and driven back at Grahamsville, on the Charleston and Savannah Railway, leaving its dead and wounded on the field. Another battle took place on the 4th, between the Federal and Confederate cavalry; the former were defeated, and Kilpatrick wounded. Sherman at last advices was south-west of Millen, and on the 6th his advance was reported skirmishing with Confederate outposts defending Savannah. The prisoners report Sherman almost destitute of provisions.

Hood was closely besieging Thomas in Nashville. His intrenchments were within half a mile of the Federal lines. There had been no engagement of importance since the battle of Franklin; but Hood was reported to have been repulsed in an attack upon a block-house near Murfreesboro', with the loss of six guns.

General Beauregard reports that the Federals evacuated Decatur, Alabama, on the 26th of November, after destroying their stores and ammunition.

Confederate accounts report that Sherman, previous to setting out upon his march through Georgia, ordered the burning of every house in East Tennessee, and the general devastation of the country.

General Stephen Lee, in an order issued to his troops, congratulates them on a victory over the Federals at Franklin, on the 30th ult., and compliments them on their bravery and devotion. He promises them that, if they fight with equal valour in future, Nashville, with its immense stores, will soon be in their possession. From this it appears the Southerners claim that as a victory which the Federals represent to have been a defeat. Later estimates of the casualties at Franklin state the Federal loss at 1500 men, and that of the Confederates at from 3000 to 5000.

From Petersburg there was nothing of importance. The Federals were going, it was said, into winter quarters. Sheridan had laid waste the Loudon Valley.

General Early reports that a force of his cavalry, under General Rosser, surprised and captured Fort Kelly, at New Creek, on the 28th ult. Rosser afterwards captured Piedmont, and destroyed a large amount of Federal stores and all the Government buildings. The prisoners and artillery were all brought off, besides 1015 horses and 1000 head of cattle. Rosser's entire loss was only five men.

GENERAL NEWS.

Mr. Chase had been appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Lord Lyons had left Washington for England in consequence of ill-health.

The report of Secretary Fessenden states the probable increase of the public debt during the present fiscal year at 482,374,188 dols., and that the total public debt will amount by the 1st of July, 1865, to 2,223,061,677 dols. He disapproves of foreign loans, advocates increased taxation, and says that, since the people have pronounced for the continuation of the war until its object shall have been achieved, it is for them to decide whether they will provide the necessary means for prosecuting it by loans or compel him to resort to a further issue of paper money. He expresses the opinion that if the duration and expense of the war had been foreseen it would never have been undertaken.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S MESSAGE.

Congress assembled at Washington on the 5th inst. Mr. Lincoln's Message was delivered next day. He declares that the condition of the foreign relations of the country is reasonably satisfactory, and that the strictest neutrality has been preserved in regard to affairs in Mexico. He considers that, after the expiration of the stipulated six months' notice to Great Britain, it will be necessary for the United States to increase its naval force upon the great lakes. He suggests the issue of a limited amount of public securities, which shall be exempt from taxation or seizure for debts, with such restrictions as shall guard against abuse of so important a privilege, to enable every prudent person to set aside an annuity against a day of want. He recommends the Constitutional abolition of slavery, and believes that the next Congress will pass it if the present does not.

Referring to the recognition of the Confederates as belligerents, President Lincoln says:—

It is possible that if it were a new and open question the maritime Powers, with the light they now enjoy, would not concede the privileges of naval belligerents to the insurgents in the United States, destitute as they are, and always have been, equally of ships, ports, and harbours. Disloyal emissaries have been neither less assiduous nor more successful during last year than they were before that time in their efforts, under that privilege, to embroil our country in foreign wars. The desire and determination of the maritime States to defeat that design are believed to be as sincere as, and cannot be more earnest than, our own.

In reference to the war, Mr. Lincoln says:—

Since our last annual meeting all the important lines and positions then occupied by our forces have been maintained, and our armies have steadily advanced, liberating the regions left in their rear, so that Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and parts of other States have produced reasonably fair crops. The most remarkable feature in the military operations of the year is Sherman's attempted march of 300 miles directly through the insurgent region. The result not yet being known, conjecture in regard to it shall not be indulged.

On the growth of the country during the war, and his own policy for the future, he says:—

While it is melancholy to reflect that the war has filled so many graves and carried sorrow to so many hearths, it is some relief to know that, compared with the surviving, the fallen have been so few. While corps, and divisions, and brigades, and regiments have formed, and fought, and dwindled, and gone out of existence, a great majority of men who composed them are still living, and the material resources of the country are now more complete and abundant than ever. The national resources are unexhausted, and are believed to be inexhaustible. The public purpose is to re-establish and maintain the national authority, which is unchanged and believed to be unchangeable. Between the Southerners and ourselves the issue is distinct, simple, and inflexible. It is an issue which can only be tried by war and decided by victory. If we yield, we are beaten; if the Southern people fail their President, he is beaten. Either way it would be a victory and defeat following war. What is true of him who heads the insurgents' cause is not necessarily true of those who follow him. Although he cannot re-accept the Union, they can. Some, we know already, desire peace and reunion. They can at any moment have peace simply by laying down their arms and submitting to the national authority under the Constitution. After so much the Government could not, if it would, maintain war against them. The loyal people would not sustain or allow it. If questions should remain we would adjust them by peaceful measures of legislation, conference courts, and votes. The executive power itself would be greatly diminished by the cessation of the war. The actual way of pardon and remissions of forfeiture, however, would still be within the Executive control. A year ago a general pardon and an amnesty were offered, upon specified terms, to all except certain designated classes. It was at the same time made known that the excepted classes were within the contemplation of special clemency. During the year many availed themselves of the general provisions, and many others would do so only that signs of bad faith in some led to such precautionary measures as render a practical process less easy and less certain. During the same time, also, special pardons have been granted to individuals of the excepted classes, and no voluntary action has been denied. Thus practically the door has been open to all. It is still so open; but a time may come, and probably will come, when the public duty shall demand that it be closed, and that in lieu thereof more rigorous measures than heretofore be adopted.

On the subject of his emancipation policy, Mr. Lincoln says:—

In presenting the abandonment of armed resistance to the national authority on the part of the insurgents as the only indispensable condition to ending the war on the part of the Government, I retract nothing heretofore said as to slavery. I repeat the declaration made a year ago; and that while I remain in my present position I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation. Nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that proclamation, or by any of the acts of Congress. If the people should, by whatever mode or means, make it an Executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another, and not I, must be their instrument to perform it. In stating a single condition of peace, I mean simply to say, that the war will cease on the part of the Government whenever it shall have ceased on the part of those who began it.

ACCIDENT ON THE NORTH KENT RAILWAY.

A FRIGHTFUL ACCIDENT occurred at half-past four, on Friday afternoon week, in the Blackheath railway tunnel. The fast train leaving Maidstone at 2.40 p.m. ran into a ballast-train a quarter of a mile down the tunnel from the Blackheath end, and three-quarters of a mile from the Charlton end. The last stoppage of the passenger-train was made at Woolwich at a quarter-past four, and the officials and passengers assert that the way was signalled clear both at Charlton and the entrance of the tunnel. Be that as it may, it is certain the fast train was in the act of going through the Blackheath tunnel, at the rate of about forty miles an hour, when it ran with terrific force into the ballast-train from Higham on its way up to London. In the collision five platelayers in the ballast-train were killed on the spot. The passengers were thrown from their seats against each other with great force, and all were more or less injured. The driver and stoker of the up passenger-train are fearfully scalded. The latter has since died. The screams, fright, and confusion among the passengers in the dark tunnel at the time of the accident were most distressing. They could not be extricated from the tunnel for upwards of an hour. During this time fires were kindled of the broken fragments of the carriages, but the wet dripping from the roof of the tunnel prevented them from burning brightly, and the glare and smoke only added to the horror of the scene, which was further increased by the shrieks of the women and the groans of the wounded. The engine of the passenger-train was overturned and thrown across the two lines, and the greater part of the ballast and passenger carriages were broken into fragments. The engine, worth about £1500, is totally destroyed, and, to say nothing of damage to injured passengers, the loss to the railway company in the destruction of rolling stock is not less than £3000. Messengers were instantly dispatched to Charlton and Blackheath to stop all up and down traffic. The 4.20 train from London was only stopped from entering the tunnel by one or two minutes. Mr. Chapman, the station-master at Blackheath, telegraphed to London Bridge, where an engine was in readiness, and Mr. Knight, superintendent; Mr. Harris, assistant superintendent of the traffic department; and Mr. Corner, the locomotive superintendent, at once proceeded to the spot, followed by Dr. Adams, the company's medical man, and a staff of surgeons, who, with the unin-

jured passengers, were most assiduous in their attention to the wounded. After the lapse of an hour, a portion of the succeeding train stopped at Charlton, went into the tunnel, and conveyed the passengers in charge of Inspector Ware back to Charlton station, where the injured were taken care of. Several took cabs, and those who were able walked to Blackheath Railway station, and thence proceeded by train to London and the intermediate stations. Four of the bodies of the dead platelayers were conveyed in the break van to Blackheath. The fifth body, that of William Webb, could not be extricated from the rubbish till a very late hour. There being no ventilation, the men had to work in the midst of great heat and a thick and suffocating smoke, but they did their duty manfully. One passenger had a broken jaw, others broken ribs, and several fractured limbs.

A passenger states that he placed his wife and daughter in a first-class carriage at Stroud and got into a third-class carriage himself. The effect of the shock of the collision was terrible. He was flung with great force against the opposite side of the carriage. The women in the carriage screamed frantically. He recovered from the shock and got out of the carriage to look for his wife. He caught hold of a rope attached to the side of the tunnel, and by that means swung himself down. He found himself in total darkness, which was rendered dreadful by the appalling groans and shrieks issuing from the different carriages. In the midst of the noise he was able to distinguish his wife's voice, and learnt thus that she was alive. By aid of the rope attached to the brickwork of the tunnel he groped his way along through the darkness to the place whence he heard his wife's voice. He found her seriously but not fatally injured. His daughter, a child aged two years, escaped unhurt.

Although the accident must have been known to the officials in London soon after its occurrence, passengers booked to Gravesend and other distant stations were taken down to Blackheath some two hours afterwards, and had either to return to London or to seek other conveyance home.

The inquest on the bodies of the sufferers was opened on Monday at the Railway Tavern, Blackheath. Several witnesses were called in reference to the movements of the trains and the signalling. It seems certain that the train of ballast-waggons came to a stop in the tunnel, that the guard got down to uncouple part of the trucks, and that the collision took place before any portion of the train started again. The accident seems to be attributable to the circumstance that the line had been signalled clear from Blackheath when, in fact, the ballast-train was in the tunnel. The inquest was adjourned.

ANOTHER COLLISION.

On Monday morning a second accident occurred on this company's property, this time on the Greenwich line, and, like the one in Blackheath-tunnel, through a failure in the signalling. The scene of this fresh accident was the junction where the Greenwich line diverges, a short distance from New-cross, at which spot, shortly before eight o'clock, an engine was on the up line, preparing to run on the metals of the North Kent line, when the passenger-train from Greenwich came up, and a collision was the consequence. The driver and stoker of the passenger-train were much injured, as were some of the passengers. The cause of this accident is stated to have arisen from the signal "All clear" being given at the last point which the passenger-train passed; and the driver was proceeding, in perfect security, though a dense fog which then prevailed, until the very moment when the train came into collision with the engine.

THE CHRISTMAS MAIL.

DID it ever occur to you, dear reader, that our complete postal arrangements and the marvellous facilities for locomotion have done much to alter those conditions which once made Christmas such a glorious time? Less than a century ago, this period of the year was the great opportunity for the reunion of those who, during all the long months that had elapsed, had been cut off from family associations and all that pure affection which is associated with the word home. Young men and women who had come to London looked forward to keeping their Christmas under the old roof-tree in the old farmhouse. People who were separated only by a dozen miles found no time to make a tedious journey by the stage; and, somehow, even "the post" had a sort of uncertainty and unsatisfactoriness in its arrangements which could not compensate for the necessary division of families. So Christmas remained the great holiday of all the year, when people long parted met together again and made the season an earthly foretaste of heaven; when old quarrels were made up or cast aside with a quiet, hearty grasp of the hand; when old thoughts and loving remembrances came out bright and fresh, like the old plate newly burnished for the genial feast; and when everybody was moved with a delight little less than ecstatic because they were to meet once more in all the loving fellowship of their lives, after twelve months of comparative solitude and much yearning after cherished sympathy. It stands to reason, however, that when a shilling railway journey will take you in half an hour to the home of your youth, that the Christmas reunion loses much of its special interest; and, as for any news, why, five quires of note-paper and a hundred envelopes for penance, with a penny stamp to frank a letter from Land's End to John o' Groats, only needs an hour's leisure and six lessons in penmanship to exhaust all the news of a month's standing, to say nothing of cheap newspapers and sixpenny electric telegrams.

In a general way, too, it is only a fresh-hearted, genial soul who can, at ten o'clock on Christmas morning, clasp the hand of a man from whom he has parted just seven hours before and wish him all the compliments of the season with heartfelt emotion and a radiant face. Similarly, when I invite Jones to dine with me on a Christmas Day, having met Jones on the Corn Market every market-day during the year, and hearing from him on every other day, I do not feel moved to fall upon him, directly he comes inside the street door and say, in a husky voice, "My dear Jones! my friend! my glorious old boy! how delighted I am to see you! What years it seems since we have met! What will you have to drink? Come; come along to the fire, and tell me everything!" It would be absurd to do it, and yet I am really attached to Jones—quite as much attached as though we only met once a year. And it's no fault of mine that they have opened a branch railway into Slopsbury; nor, for that matter, that they ever made any railway at all. The truth is, that the means of transport and the facilities for communication have superseded elements which once made Christmas a time of special rejoicing, apart from its sacred origin—"if, indeed," as Mr. Scrooge's nephew said, "anything can be apart from that;" but they have not superseded the real goodwill towards men which that holiday represents and is intended to perpetuate, for they have helped to carry its holy influences where otherwise they would never have been felt.

To children Christmas-tide is still, and let us hope it will ever be, the glad time of the year, not only because their innocent hearts rejoice at any holiday season, and that, while their consciences are undisturbed, their cares are few and overcome by simple pleasures, but because in their little lives days count as weeks, and weeks as years. The chubby rogues who come down rosy and smiling in their bright holiday dresses feel, somehow, that the snapdragon last night was a very long time ago, and they can raise a shout of genuine delight when they see their uncle come in with a great branch of holly to decorate the wall, or a twig to stick in the pudding—a shout intended quite as much for him as for the promise of the feast. They have so much to anticipate, and are the centre, let us hope, of so much love, that time is an unknown quantity and separation a minus sign.

Regarded only in the light of Christmas, what a marvellous machinery for the expansion of peace and goodwill and the holy memories of home affection the "mail" has become! Across the Atlantic in magnificent ships, with gorgeous cabins and "every luxury, including a cow," the bags, containing thousands of expositions of human interest, are carried swiftly to a nation where both peace and brotherhood are at present blasphemed. In fast, little, black, snorting steam-vessels, where the captain keeps a keen eye upon them, other missives cross the Pacific, ultimately bound to

remote islands, where Crusoe colonists wait for a cheering word of hope and home, or go ashore at Spanish ports in long boats, with negro rowers, and are fumigated and detained in quarantine before delivery; or are taken (half a household of them) into Sydney Harbour, or to the Quay at Melbourne, there to be dispersed, many of them, to remote settlements or stations at the diggings to which a postal courier only finds his way through the bush at long intervals. All over the world these messengers fly, and most of all in the special carriages of night mail-trains, where careful officers are busy sorting and sealing as they are borne along at a tremendous pace, but yet are ready to drop each precious freighted bag at the station to which it properly belongs. Yes, they are winged messengers, indeed; but all their messages are not of love and goodwill. Some of them commence with, "Sir, unless," and end with, "shall be compelled to consult my solicitor." Many are full of bitter reproach, and others of lying representations or cruel words of wrong and selfishness.

Yet, at Christmas-tide, we would rather think of all those messages of love and truth that make the heart beat faster and the lips form a half-spoken blessing—of the magic words that can make even the desert of the Bush blossom with Christmas roses in the shape of tender memories, and bring glad tidings of great joy to the grand-sire as well as to the youngest child in many an English homestead.

"UNDER THE CHRISTMAS ROSE;"

OR,

GRANDPAPA'S IDEAS ABOUT MISTLETOE.

I'm now an old fellow of three score and five,
But yet I've been young in my day;
Ah, well!—now young fellows don't half seem alive—
In my time that wasn't the way;
And as for the mistletoe—bless me, we beaus
Declared "under the mistletoe, under the rose!"

The kisses—dear me! why it makes one quite sad
Of such bygone delight when one thinks.
I remember (my dear! no, it isn't "too bad")
When I met with a saucy young minx
Whose name was — but no! that I'll never disclose,
For, under the mistletoe, under the rose!

From kissing such lips who'd have thought to refrain?
Like two cherries just ripe to be picked;
I'm inclined to believe that they kissed back again
(My dear, you should not contradict).
Their owner at least did not fiercely oppose—
But, well;—under the mistletoe, under the rose!

I whispered all sorts of soft things in her ear—
I vowed—I protested—I sued.
She was not indisposed, so I fancy, to hear—
(To call me "a goose," dear, is rude!)
And she answered me—what? Why, as everyone knows,
Under the mistletoe's under the rose!

She declared that she loved me, and tenderly, too!
And she did—that I haven't a doubt.
(My dear! why, now no one would guess it was you,
If you hadn't yourself let it out.)
Well, young folks, do as we did—if so you dispose—
Counting under the mistletoe under the rose. H.

THE SIGNAL-MAN AT CHRISTMAS.

ANYBODY who desires to reduce his proportions without also reducing his strength cannot do better than go down to Dover, during the bright summer weather, and take a constitutional walk three times a day on the shingly beach which reaches from the pier to Shakespeare's Cliff.

To say nothing of a capital walk, ankle-deep in loose pebbles, and with the bright blue water singing as it runs in flecks of foam among the stones, there are a score or so of timber groins, at moderate intervals from each other and about breast-high at low-water, to climb which is the greatest fun, and at the same time the healthiest amusement, in the world.

Besides, there are all sorts of interesting objects for which such a walk may well be undertaken; and, to begin with, that delightful occupation of throwing stones into the water, which every lover of nature must keenly appreciate. We have no hesitation in saying that to throw stones into the sea is one of the choicest pastimes of which our imperfect nature is capable, and nobody ever knew a man of genuine talent and distinguished ability who did not take the first opportunity of pursuing this amusement when his good fortune enabled him to visit even a fashionable watering-place. He may have done so unconsciously (and it is one of the exquisite pleasures of the performance that it involves a sort of deeply contemplative forgetfulness); but he never omitted it, we may be sure. Having enjoyed half an hour's recreation of this kind, then, and seen the life-boat slung under the timber piers supporting the railway and swathed in its summer covering,—having also picked up a few odd-looking flints, and dreamed of finding porphyry and agate, and tried unsuccessfully to break a nodule,—the visitor may ascend the steep and devious pathway which leads up the face of the coast, and turn stoutly towards Shakespeare's Cliff. What a glorious air-bath for London lungs, and what a glorious clear expanse of view for London eyes may be obtained on this grand summit, standing, like the poet himself, in a grandeur which seems to separate it from all surrounding objects, but found, on nearer inspection, to be really a part of the great world spreading out around it, and only conspicuous by its own majesty and beauty!

Looking out towards the bright blue, sparkling sea, in which the clouds are reflected in tints from opal to crimson, like the fabulous changes of a dying dolphin, one is tempted to envy the bronzed coastguard-men, who are always looking through their weather-beaten telescopes, or even the grizzled signal-man, whose rude brick shanty is the only building on the cliff, and, as it is not a dwelling, seems to be intended less for a human shelter than for a shed where old spars and sea gear are stowed away.

Of all the delightful walks in England there are few better than that undertaken on a breezy summer's morning from Dover to Folkestone, along the cliff, by the narrow paths used by the coast-guard-men. The exquisite glimpses of sea reach—the wonderful sky changes—the scent of the crisp, short turf—the luxury of a rest amongst the long grass, where the soft sea-breeze seems to stimulate every pore—the prizes that may be discovered in the shape of silver-topped mushrooms, to be carefully broken off and consigned to the tourist's satchel—and, finally, the descent of the steep hill into Folkestone and the broiled steak at the modest inn where they cheerfully convert your treasures into sauce—all these things make such a journey worth remembering.

But in the winter, when the dark, lead-coloured sky lowers over the heaving sea, and the flying scud is driven before the wind, that lashes showers of cold spray far up the cliff-side—when a low, sullen roar comes booming from that great black chasm over the edge of the great chalk mountain, and old sailors, shifting their quids, look critically upwards, with a sidelong glance seaward at the same time, and tell us that we shall have some rough weather before morning—then the men hold themselves ready to loosen the lashings of the life-boat; the coastguard keep as bright a look out as the black night will let them from their wild stations on the coast, and anxious eyes and ears are strained to discover where help is likely to be needed; for on such a night the signal-man has hoisted that queer buoy-shaped telegraph which has announced the coming of a storm. This, too, is part of the duty he will have to do at Christmas-tide, as well as at other seasons of the year; and he must be a hardy tourist, indeed, who would wish to pay him a visit at his lonely station on a Christmas Eve.

The establishment of Admiral Fitzroy's signals at Dover is quite a recent addition to the means of safety on the coast; and on the opposite side of the bay rise the castle and the remains of that old

Roman Pharos which once showed its red beacon-fire to vessels approaching from the coast of France.

The signals used are the cone and the drum. The cone, as hoisted to the staff in our Engraving, is a warning against a southerly gale: when suspended from the point it indicates bad weather from the north; but when generally rough weather may be expected, and from any point of the compass, the signalman hoists the black cylinder; and, sure of the approaching tempest,

He hears its stormy music in the drum.

LAW AND CRIME.

A PLEASANT little question of the law as to carriers is left for discussion by the Court of Common Pleas in an action, "Robinson v. the London and South-Western Railway Company." The plaintiff wished to send a mare, which he had bought for £135, to London from Hampshire by the defendants' line. The station-master recognised the animal, and, knowing its value, declined to allow it to be carried, unless on payment of £4 5s. by way of insurance, in addition to the fare of 17s. 6d. The reason put forward for this charge was that, by the statute of 17 and 18 Vict., c. 31, it is enacted as follows in reference to railway companies:—

Every such company shall be liable for the loss of or injury to any horses, &c. Provided always that no greater damages shall be recovered for the loss of, or for injury done to, any such animals beyond the sums hereinafter mentioned—that is to say, for any horse £50, &c., unless the person sending or delivering the same to such company shall, at the time of such delivery, have declared them to be respectively of higher value than as above mentioned, in which case it shall be lawful for such company to demand and receive, by way of compensation for the increased risk and care thereby occasioned, a reasonable percentage upon the excess of the value so declared above the respective sums so limited as aforesaid, and which shall be paid in addition to the ordinary rate of charge.

The plaintiff refused to pay the excess "by way of compensation for the increased risk," &c., and the station-master refused to permit the animal to be conveyed. So Mr. Robinson brings an action against the company for damages sustained by such refusal. In aggravation of such damages plaintiff wished to show that he might have sold the mare for 300 guineas to run at a steeplechase, had she been conveyed to town in time; but evidence to this effect was excluded, although plaintiff was allowed (subject to future argument) to adduce testimony that the mare was worth £250 as a hunter. The jury were allowed to decide one question only in the cause—namely, whether £5 per cent was a "reasonable percentage," according to the statute, and of course taking into consideration the length of the proposed journey. The jury decided that it was reasonable. The main question left for the Court in banco is, therefore, Was the company (by its servant) justified in insisting on the payment of such percentage as a premium beyond the ordinary fare? We do not at present see any ground for belief that this question will be affirmatively answered. The act seems to us to be purely protective. If the company carry a valuable animal, they shall not be liable beyond £50, unless insurance or percentage be paid upon the excess. This is, no doubt, a very great boon to railway companies; but there does not appear any power given them to refuse carriage altogether unless such percentage be paid. If it be not, then, in case of damage, all beyond £50 would fall on the sender. It must be remembered that carriers have always been treated as enjoying to some extent monopolies, and that this is especially so in the case of railways. Under the old law it has even been held that not even a fraudulent undervaluing, on the part of the sender, would release a carrier from responsibility in the case of accident from negligence. This common law has been modified by the statute quoted, and on this point we cannot foresee a successful issue for the company. A carrier refusing to convey has been held liable for damage by reason of the intending sender having missed his market. In this case the amount of damage will form a secondary question.

Snow in the streets suggests one or two matters of legislation. In a walk through the streets on a morning after snow, the pedestrian may observe several states of the pavement. One householder clears away the accumulation in front of his premises. A second casts ashes over it. A third permits it to remain, and the boys make slides over it, to the common danger of passengers. A fourth sprinkles it with salt and converts it to a dismal cold slush. The boys are liable to fine, the negligent householder is in like peril, and there is a penalty affixed to the casting into the street of ashes, even to prevent accident, as ashes are the property of the parochial dust contractor. But casting salt over the snow is not punishable. It is, nevertheless, the fact that this is the worst nuisance of any; for snow and salt commingled make a powerful freezing mixture. It will freeze water even before a fire. When lodged in the street the intense cold which it produces will penetrate through the stoutest boots, far more readily and more injuriously to health than snow or water. It is a most cruel act to resort to such a contrivance. It is quite permissible to strew sawdust, straw, or sand, and this is the course adopted by the intelligent and humane when alternations of snow, thaw, and frost render the pavement dangerous.

An ancient custom has been revived by the knighting of the chief magistrate at Bow-street Police Court, who is now Sir Thomas Henry. The post was once held by Henry Fielding—perhaps better, but scarcely more deservedly, known as an author than as one of the greatest reformers of our magisterial and police system. We have more than once in these columns already referred to his suggestions, of which many have been carried out, and others are still deserving of practical consideration. His essay on the causes of the Increase of Robbers in England may yet be perused with advantage. His brother and successor, Sir John Fielding, known as the blind magistrate, received the honour of a title, which only in two instances has since been declined by those who might have received it by virtue of the like position.

A SINGULAR QUARREL.—An affair arising out of a singular dispute has just been brought before a police court at Berlin. A gentleman and a lieutenant in the army meeting in the street, the stick of the former struck by accident the sword of the latter. Each party turned round, apparently expecting the other to apologise, when at last the civilian remarked, "Why the deuce do you pass through the streets with your spilt sticking out in such a manner?" High words followed, which ended in the officer prosecuting his adversary for an insult to his military honour by an injurious epithet applied to his sword. The President of the Court severely reprimanded the civilian for the expression used, and the Court, considering that the accused could not be in the possession of his full mental faculties, admitted extenuating circumstances, and condemned him to a fine of 15 thalers (£2 5s.).

THE ANTI-TOBACCO SOCIETY.—The case against Mr. Thomas Reynolds, the Secretary of the Anti-Tobacco Society, was heard at the Westminster Police Court on Monday. A Mr. Innes had been threatened with proceedings for smoking at the Barnes station of the South-Western Railway. He was told that proceedings would be taken at the instance of the Anti-Tobacco Society, and he wrote to the defendant on the subject. In reply he received a letter, which informed him that, if he chose to pay the fine (40s.) to the man who made the charge against him, no proceedings would be taken. Instead of doing so he took out a summons against Mr. Reynolds for seeking to extort money. In his examination on Monday he said the threat of proceedings did not put him in any fear, and therefore the magistrate held that the case failed technically. Mr. Selfe, however, strongly reprehended the course taken by the society.

KING BOMBASTES AND HIS GUARDS.—At the entry of the Prussian Guards into Berlin on the 16th, the King thus addressed them:—"I see you return with joy from a war brought to a glorious end. When I permitted the newly formed regiments of the Guard, united in one division, to take part in this war, it was my intention to give these young regiments an opportunity of making for themselves a history. They have fulfilled this intention in the highest degree, and have fought with distinguished bravery. The same remark applies to the older established troops here assembled, who have added a new and unfading leaf in this war to the garland of fame adorning their honourable history. I rejoice to see so many collected around me who have so distinguished themselves by bravery, that I was able to confer upon them my visible thanks. As a lasting recognition of the claims the army has to the thanks of myself and the fatherland, I have determined that all flags and standards that have been borne on the theatre of war shall for the future bear upon the bandol the ribbon of the newly-granted war medal, and those which were carried at Dülpe or Alsen, the corresponding ribbon of the memorial cross celebrating those engagements. And it is my conviction that these newly-decorated flags and standards will be followed in future by my brave troops with as much devotion, valour, and, with God's help, victory, as I am proud to acknowledge with my royal thanks that they have been in the war just brought to a glorious close."

PARAGUAY AND THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

ACCORDING to very recent news, it would appear that there has been some probability of the State of Paraguay and the Argentine Republic being involved in an unfortunate quarrel with Brazil.

The name of Paraguay was at one time associated with the whole of the immense region of South America, comprehending the Strait of Magalhaens and the territory between Chili and Peru on the west and Brazil on the east. It is now confined to the Republic, extending from latitude 27 deg. 20 min. south, and long. 54 deg. 58 min. 40 sec. west, a space the shape of a parallelogram, with an area of 86,000 square miles. On the north its limits are not well defined from those of Brazil, and this has often produced some difficulties similar to that which is now agitating the Governments of both nations.

The whole surface of the country belongs to the basins of two rivers, the Parana and the Paraguay, while a high mountain range stretches between these two streams from north to south, and forms their watershed, sending the drainage in a large number of small streams in various directions. The climate, though tropical, has its excessive heat greatly modified by the inequalities of the surface, and, operating on a richly fertile soil, produces a vegetation of unequalled grandeur and luxuriance. In the forests are found at least sixty varieties of timber; and dyewoods, gums, perfumes, vegetable oils, and fruits are produced in almost endless profusion. Many of the hills are literally covered with the Yerba maté, the tea of South America; and the larger plains are roamed over by immense herds of cattle, which, though not all required for food, yield valuable products in hides, tallow, hair, horns, and bones.

Sugar-cane, cotton, rice, maize, tobacco, and other crops are yielded on all the alluvial tracts, where even the most primitive mode of culture is adopted; and, perhaps, in no country in the world are the means of living so abundant, and produced with so little pains.

This fertile region however, was for years cursed with those political difficulties which prevented it from advancing, or even from making use of its natural wealth. By a single effort Paraguay emancipated itself from the Spanish yoke, only to fall under one still more galling, when Dr. Francia, who commenced his political career as secretary to the revolutionary junta in 1811, became Consul, and finally dictator, in 1814.

Until his death, at eighty-four years of age, in 1840, this successful adventurer and unyielding tyrant retained his grasp upon the reins of power. His career was one of the most remarkable phenomena of modern times, and his rule was maintained by a system of espionage so vigorous and so widely spread as to carry fear into every household. Many of our readers will remember that wonderful description of Francia which appears in one of Mr. Carlyle's reviews of "Robertson's Letters on Paraguay;" and from the same review we cannot refrain from quoting this bit about Paraguay itself:—

"The people of that profuse climate live in a careless abundance, troubling themselves about few things; they build what wooden carts, hide-beds, mud-brick houses are indispensable; import what of ornamental lies handiest abroad, exchanging for it Paraguay tea in sewed goatskins. Riding through the town of Santa Fé with Parish Robertson at three in the afternoon, you will find the entire population just risen from their siesta, slipshod, half-

attained by ladders; so high, blessed be the Virgin! no mosquito can follow to sting. You sleep there, in an indiscriminate arrangement, each in his several poncho, or blanket-cloak; with some saddle, deal-box, wooden log, or the like, under your head. For bed-tester, the canopy of everlasting blue; for night-lamp burns Canopus in his infinite space; mosquitoes cannot reach you, if it please the powers. And rosy-fingered Morn, suffusing the East with sudden red and gold, and other flamboyance of swift-advancing day, attenuates all dreams; and the sun's first level light-volley sheers away sleep from

and makes a more comical figure in it than in any other of his costumes. In this guise he leads forth Miss Minnie—who looks as much like a walking doll, as it is possible for a walking doll to look like a living human creature—and, having answered the slim gentleman's minute and peculiarly Transatlantic cross-examination, as to weights ages, and family connections, they part company for a while the Commodore retiring to assume a character-dress, and the lady remaining to promenade the platform, and to look, if possible, more like a walking doll than ever. The next performance is a nautical medley of singing and dancing by Commodore Nutt, in which he shows himself in the full possession of active bodily powers, controlling his shrill voice with judgment and not a little skill. Afterwards he appears as the Irishman of theatrical existence, with very clean and brightly-patched rags, with a crownless hat, and with the orthodox shillelah. As Patrick O'Fogerty, he brandishes his shillelah, sings a rattling song, and dances an Irish jig. His acting and singing in this part betray no lack of genuine comic talent; the subsequent fun of his "classic statues" being of a rather adventitious kind. Made up in white tights, with a shield, helmet, Greek sword, spear, and club to match, the podgy little figure becomes in turn an Ajax, an Apollo, a Hercules, and various other shapes, rather calculated to unsettle preconceived ideas of antique art. The next transmutation brought Commodore Nutt before us in the uniform of his ostensible rank in the navy of the United States; and finally he reappeared in his private clothes, to sing in a



INHABITANTS OF PARAGUAY.



INFANTRY OF THE ARMY OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.

living creatures everywhere; and living men then awoken on their four-post stage there, in the Pampas, and might begin with prayer if they liked, one fancies. There is an altar decked on the horizon's edge yonder, is there not? and a cathedral wide enough?"

On the death of Francia the form of government was changed to that of a comparatively free republic, with two Consuls, chosen to serve two years.

By the latest advices it was feared that the invasion of the Banda Oriental by the Brazilian forces would lead to difficulties, since the Government of Paraguay had declared that such a step would be regarded as a declaration of war. It is still hoped, however, that the President, D. B. Mitre, will be able to pursue a course which will prevent any such disastrous consequences to the Argentine Republic.

This Republic, sometimes known as La Plata, is a confederation of twelve separate States or provinces, excluding Buenos Ayres, and embraces an area of 598,200 square miles, or, including Buenos Ayres, 748,200 square miles, with about 2,000,000 inhabitants, of whom 200,000 are Indians and 25,000 negroes. In 1863 the public income was estimated at £750,258. The army, in course of reorganisation, consists of 18,700 men, to which may be added the Militia and National Guard of Buenos Ayres, numbering 19,867 men. The navy comprises seven steamers and ten sailing-vessels. Many of the officers of the army are Frenchmen, of considerable skill in military affairs; and it is said that the Argentine cavalry are amongst the best mounted and most efficient in the world.

Our Engravings represent soldiers of the infantry, artillery, and cavalry regiments; and another illustration is published from a sketch of a group of Paraguayans in the national costume.

COMMODORE NUTT AND MISS MINNIE WARREN.

THE entertainment given by these diminutive personages at the St. James's Hall, in American parlance, called a levee, or rather a levee, with a very tall stress upon the last syllable; and, without accepting the responsibility of the meaning, we will, purely for the sake of convenience and uniformity, repeat the term here. For the "levee," then, of Commodore Nutt and Miss Minnie Warren the accessories provided are a raised and well-lit stage, two small chairs, a grand piano, and a Transatlantically slim gentleman. The piano and the slim gentleman are brought into harmonious relationship, through the medium of "The Last Rose of Summer" with variations; and, when not engaged with the instrument, the performer takes upon himself the additional duty of trotting out the Commodore and the lady, or, not to put too fine a point upon it, of playing showman. The larger share of the "levee" falls to Commodore Nutt, who first appears in the serious evening-dress of social life,

in which he shows himself in the full possession of active bodily powers, controlling his shrill voice with judgment and not a little skill. Afterwards he appears as the Irishman of theatrical existence, with very clean and brightly-patched rags, with a crownless hat, and with the orthodox shillelah. As Patrick O'Fogerty, he brandishes his shillelah, sings a rattling song, and dances an Irish jig. His acting and singing in this part betray no lack of genuine comic talent; the subsequent fun of his "classic statues" being of a rather adventitious kind. Made up in white tights, with a shield, helmet, Greek sword, spear, and club to match, the podgy little figure becomes in turn an Ajax, an Apollo, a Hercules, and various other shapes, rather calculated to unsettle preconceived ideas of antique art. The next transmutation brought Commodore Nutt before us in the uniform of his ostensible rank in the navy of the United States; and finally he reappeared in his private clothes, to sing in a

duet with Miss Minnie Warren. This young lady, meanwhile, finds several opportunities of improving the acquaintance of her visitors, and manages to do a very tolerable amount of business in the sale of her carte-de-visite.

SHAKSPEARE RELICS

AT BIRMINGHAM.

WE lately mentioned the discovery, in Birmingham, of some ancient deeds relating to various properties adjoining Shakspeare's birthplace in Henley-street. We are now enabled to give some particulars of the documents thus recovered, and which, it will be observed, are particularly interesting to Birmingham Shakspeareans, from the fact of one of the properties dealt with being possessed for a period of sixty-seven years by families resident in the outskirts of the town. The deeds are as follows:—"August 28, 15th Elizabeth, 1573.—Grant William Wedgwood, of Stratford-upon-Avon, to Richard Hornebye, of Stratford-upon-Avon, smith, of a piece of land at back of tenement belonging to said Hornebye, fronting Henley-street." The seal in this deed bears the initials "W.S." and the sealing was witnessed by John Shaxper and others. "45 Elizabeth, 1602.—Lease of tenement last mentioned, with the land at the back; Richard Hornebye; Anne, his wife; and Thomas, his son and heir, to Francis Hornebye. April 16, 1614, 12th James.—Conveyance by Thomas Hornebye to Thomas Jelfe, of Old Stratford, yeoman. March 12, 1620, 17th James.—Conveyance Thomas Jelfe to Thomas Nashe, of Lyncolnes-inn, gentl., of tenement adjoining the Bell of Thomas Bragden." The above property is bequeathed in the will of Thomas Nash, of 1642, to his cousin, Edward Nash, but is not included in the Chancery proceedings between Edward Nash and Shakspeare's granddaughter, Elizabeth Nash. "20th September, 17 Eliz., 1575.—Grant William Wedgwood to Edward Wyllie, of King's Norton, yeoman, of two tenements in Henley-street, adjoining the tenement of

Richard Hornebye, and the tenement of John Shakspeare, yeoman." The sealing of this deed is witnessed by John Shaxper, and others, but the seal is gone. "20th July, 1609, 7 James I.—Conveyance, Edward Willis to Osborn and Austyne, Trustees for Edward Wyllies and Thomas Wyllies, of Handsworth, of a tenement (formerly two) known by the sign of the Bell, adjoining the tenement late William Shakspeare." The word "late" is interlined in this deed. "April 16, 1611, 9 James I.—Conveyance, Edward Willis to Wastell and Willis, as Trustees for Simon Wastell, of Aston, of small piece of land, 17 footes square, behind the Bell, and adjoining the freehold of one John Shakspeare." This piece of land was purchased from John Shakspeare about 1589, but the conveyance is lost. "January 22, 1613, 10th James.—Grant, Edward Willis to Edward Willis, Mary, his wife, and Thomas, his son, of the Bell, occupied by Robt. Brookes, adjoining tenement, late William Shakspeare. December 1613, 11th James I.—Conveyance of

denhead, then occupied by John Tones." The witnesses to the above documents comprise, besides John Shakspeare, Francis Collins, the executor and witness of, and a legatee under, the poet's will, George Nashe, John Nash, J. Green, Thomas Greene, &c. Both the properties are described as bounded on the north by the Gillpitts or Gylldpytts. To the first-mentioned deed of 1573 is affixed a seal, bearing the initials "W. S." entwined with the true lovers' knot, and bearing a close resemblance to the engraved signet-ring preserved in the Birthplace Museum as a relic of Shakspeare; so much so that Mr. J. O. Halliwell, upon visiting Birmingham recently to inspect the deeds, believed it to be impressed from the ring seal, but he since writes:—"The seals are not identical; in fact, the letters on the sealing-wax are very much smaller than those on the ring." The discovery, however, of a seal so similar to the signet ring is very remarkable, and will doubtless lead to investigation as to whose seal it really



CAVALRY AND ARTILLERY OF THE ARMY OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC.



COMMODORE NUTT AND MISS MINNIE WARREN.

Edward Willis to Simon Wastell, of land 17 footes square. April 24, 1615, 13th James I.—Alice Bragden, widow of Thomas Bragden release of dower on the Bell, occupied by Thomas Rumney, to Edd. Willis. March 5, 1637, 12th Charles I. Grant of annuity, Thos. Willis and Son to Henry Osborn, of Perry Barr, in favour of Anne Wyllies, on the Bell, occupied by Joyce Rumney, widow. February 18, 1639, 14th Ch. I.—Conveyance, Allen Wastell, of Salfley, to Thos. Willis, of land 17 footes square, adjoining tenements late Willm. Shakspeare. 1st of March, the 22d of Ch. I.—Conveyance. T. Willis and Wife and Nash, of Stratford, and Osborn, of Great Barr, farmer, to Thomas Nash, of the Bell, adjoining premises occupied by John Rutter (the Maydenhead). The above property is not included in the will of Thomas Nash (being purchased only one month before his death), and therefore passed to Edward Nash, his cousin, as heir-at-law. "The 14th of Ch. II, 1663.—Lease, Edward Nash, citizen of London, to James Strayner, of the Bell, adjoining the May-

was, the greatest probability being that it belonged to Mr. John Shakespeare, the principal witness to the deed, and the only one present whose initial letter was "S," it being necessary at that period for the witnesses to be present when the seal was affixed. The whole of the deeds have been presented, through Mr. Halliwell, to the National Museum in the birthplace of the poet.

ROYAL ENGLISH OPERA, COVENT-GARDEN.—**OPERA COMPANY** (Limited).—Production of the Grand Comic CHRISTMAS PANTOMIME.—First appearance of DONATO.—On MONDAY, DEC. 20, the performance will commence at Seven o'clock, with Benedetti's Opera, in one act, *THE BRIDE OF SONG*. Renée, Miss Thirlwall; Peatrix, Mlle. Fanny Haddart; Adelbert, Mr. Henry Halse; and Hannibal, Mr. Alberto Lawrence. Conductor, Mr. Alfred Mellon. After which (at Half-past Eight), an entirely new and original Grand Fairy Spectacle and the Grand Ballet, *Midler, Duchateau, Montero, and Bonaventura*, will appear, assisted by the corps de ballet, Harlequin, Mr. Fred Payne; Pantaloon, Mr. Paul Herring; Columbine, Mlle. Esther; and Clown, Mr. Harry Payne. During the Harlequinade, Signor Donato, the celebrated one-legged dancer who has created such extraordinary enthusiasm at Berlin, Vienna, &c., will have the honour of making his first appearance in England, and will perform some of his most characteristic dances, including his *DANCE AVEZ MANTOU*.—*Stunt Manager*, Mr. R. Harris; *Acting Manager*, Mr. J. Russell. Private Boxes, from £4 4s. to 10s. 6d.; Stalls, 7s.; Dress Circle, 5s.; Upper Boxes, 4s.; Amphitheatre Stalls, 3s. and 2s.; Pit, 2s. 6d.; Gallery, 1s. Schools and Children under Twelve at half price to Boxes, Stalls, and Amphitheatre Stalls; and to the Pit, 1s. 6d. A Special Morning Performance at Two o'clock on Saturday, Dec. 31. Morning Performance every Monday, commencing on Jan. 2.—N.B. Donato will appear in each representation of the Pantomime.

CRYSTAL PALACE.—BOXING DAY AND CHRISTMAS.—EVERYBODY, and EVERYTHING, and EVERY AMUSEMENT.—The real place for a holiday. Adjoining the Tropical Department, Edmond's (late Wombwell's) extraordinary Menagerie. Come early. Open at Nine. Palace lighted up at dusk.

CRYSTAL PALACE.—BOXING DAY.—CHRISTMAS.—HOLIDAYS.—Combined Attractions more varied than ever. Amusements from morning till night. Impossible to describe all in advertisements. The Elliott Brothers, the classical gymnasts, Barnes, the great Champion Vaulter, in his sixty somersaults, Jean Bond and his wonderful Dog, Herr Willie, the great German Contortionist, J. H. Stead, the Cure, Most amusing Clowns, Pantomime Ballet, with Mr. Stead as Simpkin. In addition to these, Le Petit Blondin, the Juvenile Rope-dancer; Mr. Jackson Haines, the Champion American Skater; Silverster, the Charmed Monster, &c.; forming an unparalleled variety of Holiday Amusements. The Thousand and One other Attractions of the Palace were never so interesting. The Fine-Arts Courts in Variety and Beauty are unequalled in the world. The Decorations of the Palace, with the Great Christmas Tree, should be seen by all. The Great Fair and Bazaar, the best opportunity for Christmas Presents. The Shakespeare House, The Mountain Models, The Swings, Roundabout, Tivvators, and other popular amusements. The Galleries of Models and Ships. The extraordinary Chimpanzee. The unique Aquariums. All these things render the Crystal Palace the One Place for Holiday Enjoyment.

This Christmas, Edmond's (late Wombwell's) Windsor Castle Great Menagerie will be exhibited, adjoining the Palace. This fine collection of animals will of course be visited by everyone. There are three distinct groups of performing animals, with the twenty Lions, Tigers, and Leopards, the Lion Slayers, the litter of Cub Lions, the Elephants, &c. This extraordinary addition to the other attractions is, like the Palace and its approaches, all under cover.

Admission One Shilling. One hundred and fifty regular railway trains daily, from London Bridge, Victoria, and Kensington; also specials from London, Chatham, and Dover; likewise to Sydenham-hill station. Palace lighted at dusk.

BOXING DAY.—CRYSTAL PALACE.—More astounding than ever this Christmas. Every Holiday-maker must visit the Palace on this great public Holiday. Come early.

CRYSTAL PALACE.—Warm and Dry throughout the Holidays. The fifty miles of hot-water pipes throughout the Building heat it to an agreeable temperature. All approaches under cover.

GREAT ATTRACTION FOR THE HOLIDAYS.—**COMMODORE NUTT and MINNIE WARREN** will, on BOXING DAY and during the Holidays, hold Three Grand Levées at ST. JAMES'S HALL—viz., on Monday, December 20, at 10 o'clock; on Tuesday, December 21, at 10 o'clock; and on Wednesday, December 22, at 10 o'clock. They will appear in each Levée in a variety of Songs, Dances, Duets, &c.; and at the Eleven o'clock Levée they will appear in the identical Costume as worn by them at the marriage of General Tom Thumb. The Commodore and Miss Minnie Warren will be drawn from their residence to and from the Hall in their miniature carriage by four of the smallest ponies in the world—a present from General Tom Thumb. Admission, 1s. and 2s.; Reserved Stalls, 3s. Children under Ten Half Price in 2s. and 3s. places.

SCHOOL-SHIP.—The Thames Marine Officers' Training-Ship, WORCESTER, moored off Erith, is managed by a Committee of London Shipowners, Merchants, and Captains. Chairman—HENRY GREEN, Esq., Blackwall, E. Vice-Chairman—C. H. CHAMBERS, Esq., 1, Mincing-lane, E.C. Treasurer—STEPHEN CAVE, Esq., M.P., 35, Wilton-place, S.W. Respectable boys from the age of twelve to fifteen, intended for the Sea, are received on board and thoroughly educated for a seafaring life. Terms of admission, 35 ps. per annum. Forms and Prospectuses can be obtained on application to W. M. BULLIVANT, Hon. Sec., 19, London-street, E.C.

THE CHEAPEST GIFT-BOOK OF THE SEASON.—Illustrated with Twelve Coloured Engravings, an Illuminated Title, and Fifty-two Wood Engravings.

THE LIFE AND LESSONS OF OUR LORD.—Unfolded and Illustrated by the Rev. JOHN CUMMING, D.D. 7s. 6d. cloth, bound in boards; 9s. cloth, extra gilt, gilt edges; 10s. 6d. morocco antique. "Its illustrations are numerous and, especially the coloured ones, effective."—Illustrated News.

"A very splendid, a very popular, and a very useful performance."—British Standard. "Need we say more to recommend it as almost, if not altogether, an incomparable present for the coming Christmas and New Year?"—Christian Witness.

JOHN F. SHAW and CO., 48, Paternoster-row.

UNIFORM WITH DR. CUMMING'S "LIFE OF CHRIST."—On Jan. 2, No. 1, price One Penny; and Part I., price Sixpence.

THE LIFE AND LESSONS OF THE PATRIARCHS.—By the Rev. JOHN CUMMING, D.D. Illustrated with First-class Engravings.

JOHN F. SHAW and CO., 48, Paternoster-row.

PHOTOCHROMY.—A new Method of colouring Photographs, preserving all their correctness and their most delicate shadows. No knowledge of painting is required. Box of Colours and materials, with instructions and specimen, 10s. 6d.—LECHERTER BARBE and CO., 60, Regent-street; Wholesale—7, Glasshouse-street, Golden-square.

ORNAMENTS FOR THE DRAWING-ROOM, &c.—An Extensive Assortment of Alabaster, Marble, Bronze, and other Ornaments. Manufactured and Imported by J. TERNANT, 149, Strand, W.C.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION TO THE ILLUSTRATED TIMES.—(In all cases to be paid in advance.) Stamped Edition, to go free by post. Three months, 4s. 4d.; Six Months, 8s. 8d.; Twelve Months, 17s. 4d. Post Office Orders to be made payable to THOMAS FOX, Strand Branch. Four Stamps should be sent for Single Copies. Office: 2, Catherine-street, Strand, W.C.

ILLUSTRATED TIMES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1864.

THE COMPLIMENTS, AND DUTIES, OF THE SEASON.

At the risk of being classed with those who, with "a twice-told tale vex the dull ear of a drowsy man," we conform to universal practice, and wish our readers "all the compliments of the season." Indeed, it is not merely a "twice-told tale" in our case; for this is the tenth occasion of the kind on which we have been privileged to offer our congratulations to the public through these columns. We trust, however, that it is neither to dull ears nor drowsy men that we now address ourselves once again at Christmas-tide, but to lively spirits and to ears open alike to the accents of pleasure and the calls of duty. Wishing, then, "a merry Christmas" to all our readers, we would respectfully remind them that while this is peculiarly the season of festivity and enjoyment, it is also the time when we should give a backward glance at the past and a forward one to the future, and ascertain whether we have neglected any duty since the 25th of December last, and take care that, if so, we amend ere another celebration of the great Christian anniversary comes round. This is particularly the time when we should have "a tear for pity,

and a hand open as day for melting charity." We have already had a taste of the hard winter which weather prophets are predicting for us; and, if the prognostications of these seers be realised, much privation and suffering must ere long be endured in our midst. Shall we not all do what we can to alleviate and mitigate that privation and suffering? The managers of charitable institutions of all kinds are making appeals on behalf of those to whom they severally minister. Let not those appeals be made in vain. And, in addition to those more public means of relieving distress, there are in all our neighbourhoods numerous poor wretches through whose "looped and windowed raggedness" the "nipping and the eager air" of winter "bites shrewdly," and who have but scanty means of providing those comforts and enjoyments which are deemed appropriate to the season. Let each of us do but a little—limit our own desires in but a trifling measure—and much at least of the suffering around us will be obviated, while our own enjoyments will be in no way lessened, but rather have an additional zest given to them.

At this season we have little disposition to perform one of the functions of journalism—that of criticism; but there is one thing on which we cannot forbear making a few remarks. As every one knows, there is a class of men in the metropolis who earn a scanty livelihood by being what is denominated "boardmen"—men, that is, who perambulate the streets as walking advertisements, with a board displaying some announcement or other, either suspended from their shoulders or elevated above their heads in the manner portrayed in an engraving we lately published. This is the time of year when men are most required to follow this occupation, because it is now that programmes of amusements and announcements of all sorts are most prominently placed before the public. This, therefore, is the time when the poor "boardmen" have a chance of making "a good thing of it," and yet this is the season, above all others, which the police authorities have chosen for issuing an edict forbidding the exhibition of peripatetic advertisements in the customary way. Surely this is a harsh and an ill-timed measure. The police commissioners—if the "boardmen" and "men-in-irons" must be banished from the streets—might have chosen another season to make an attack upon them. The earnings of these men, many of whom are unfit for other work, are small enough at the best; and they might surely have been allowed to reap the benefit of the pantomime season unmolested. We hope the authorities will think better of it, and withdraw their edict until the weather is more genial and other descriptions of labour more easily obtained. We regard the adoption of this course as peculiarly a duty of the season, and as such earnestly commend it to the consideration of Sir Richard Mayne and his coadjutors.

SAYINGS AND DOINGS.

HER MAJESTY'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS GIFTS were on Monday morning distributed amongst a large number of poor old people in the metropolis.

MR. CORBEN, whose exertions at Rochdale resulted in great prostration, is now nearly restored to health.

MR. JOHN CALCOTT HOUSLEY and MR. THOMAS FAED have been elected from the associate rank to be Royal Academicians, in the place of Mr. Dyce and Sir John Watson Gordon, deceased.

FIVE SHOCKS OF EARTHQUAKE were felt at Florence on the 12th inst.

THE REV. E. HILLVARY, Chaplain of Norwich Workhouse, charged with identifying himself with Brother Ignatius and neglecting his duty, has been dismissed by the Poor-Law Board.

MR. SOLOMON HART, R.A., has been elected librarian of the Royal Academy, in the place of Mr. Pickersgill, R.A., resigned.

A GIRL OF FIFTEEN, with a child in her arms, applied for relief at Northwick last week. She had been married at thirteen.

MR. FOLEY is to be commissioned to execute a memorial statue of the late Lord Clyde, to be erected in Glasgow.

LISBON was visited by a furious hurricane on the 13th, which occasioned a great loss of shipping and property.

A LETTER, with the following address, lately passed through the Canadian post-office:—"Mr. C. S. S., on board the Grand Trunk train, good-looking, smooth-faced fellow, fighting weight about 169 lb., travels with a black and tan dog, a little one, but still a good one."

AT PANAMA the cultivation of cotton is very zealously carried out, with very considerable success. It is said that the yield in Salvador and Guatemala will be immense.

MR. GIBSON, the famous sculptor, has intimated to the Royal Academy, that he intends to bequeath £32,000 to that body, on condition that three moderate-sized rooms for the reception of the casts of all the testator's works shall be fitted up and maintained in perpetuity.

THE EMPEROR OF THE FRENCH has recommended that the great dignitaries and functionaries of the empire should increase their balls and receptions this winter, in order to encourage trade, which is suffering from the financial crisis.

MR. HOLMAN HUNT intends to make a second lengthened sojourn in the East. He will probably leave this country for Bagdad early in the spring, with the object of painting a Scripture subject on an unusually large scale.

LOUIS ANDER, who for many years was the favourite tenor of the Austrians, died at Vienna a few days ago. The poor fellow was out of his senses, and he is said to have suffered terribly during the last day of his life.

A PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOLARSHIP, in honour of the late Sir William Hamilton, is to be established in the University of Edinburgh. A committee has been formed to collect subscriptions to carry out the scheme.

THE MONOPOLY OF TOBACCO, in PORTUGAL, finishes at the end of the year, and a great number of new establishments are about to be opened for the sale and manufacture of the article.

ONE MURDERER gave us the word "burke;" a second appears likely to add to the vocabulary of trade. In a small shop, not far from Sloane-square, Chelsea, may be seen the following tasteful announcement:—"Hats muller'd here!"

AT A COLLIERY, near Mold, in Flintshire, a quantity of water, which had accumulated in an old pit, burst through the barrier into a colliery where about sixty men were at work, and, before help could be afforded, nine persons were drowned.

THE FRENCH and Italian Governments have entered into arrangements which will lead to the expulsion from Rome of all political exiles who can be proved to have taken any part in the promotion of brigandage.

M. MOCQUARD has left an enormous fortune; but, notwithstanding his special opportunities for making money during a long series of years, it is difficult to believe in the sum spoken of, which is seventeen millions of francs (£280,000).

THERE IS A NEW YORK REGIMENT which, during their three years' service, has travelled by sea and land more than 27,000 miles, fought twenty general engagements, marched through fifteen States, and has been under Burnside, Pope, McClellan, McDowell, Meade, Sherman, and Grant.

A MAN NAMED HOFFMAN has been arrested at Havre for a robbery of about 30,000*fr.* from the Stuttgart post office. He had been staying in Paris, where he had spent about 20,000*fr.*, and when captured was preparing to proceed to America with a countryman. The trunks of the two men were searched, and about 30,000*fr.*, principally in German money, recovered.

BUTLER'S CANAL, on the James River, which has been so long in progress, is 550 ft. in length, 60 ft. wide at the bottom, and 125 ft. at the top. It will have 15 ft. of water at low tide. It goes through a strata of unctuous clay, in which vegetable matter exists, half converted into coal.

THE POPE one day, while talking with some monsignori about the deplorable condition of the Catholic Church, one of them said: "Oh, we have nothing to fear, your Holiness, for it is written that St. Peter's bark shall never be shipwrecked." "Yes," answered the Pope, "that's all very well for the bark, but how about her crew?"

ABOUT 10,000 PIECES OF ROMAN MONEY, principally of the reigns of Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero, have just been discovered in the bed of the Mayenne, at St. Leonard. Their presence is explained by the fact of a dangerous ford having formerly existed at the spot, and the custom of travellers to throw in the river a piece of money *ex voto*.

A NORFOLK CLERGYMAN recently wrote to a landlord requesting to know whether a man and woman, his tenants, were married. He was informed that they had been married before a registrar; whereupon the clergyman said that he declined to have anything to do with them unless they were re-married in church.

THE LOUNGER AT THE CLUBS.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS to you, readers! I have just come from the Privy Council Chamber, where long-winded, tough-lunged, hard-headed, leather-conscience lawyers, clothed in silk and horse-hair, were droning about the matter of Bishop Colenso, debating whether the Bishop of Cape Town has the power to unfrock the Bishop of Natal; and this was my reflection when I left the room—It's no matter how they settle it. We may go and keep Christmas; for Christianity, which has blessed the world for 1864 years, more or less, and will continue to bless the world till the crack of doom, well deserves all these bickerings about it. The form of it may change, as the form of it since it first came down from heaven has changed, and much may be swept away which we take to be Christianity, but is not; but the vital essence is immortal, indestructible, and will come out of the fire as gold refined and continue to shine brighter and brighter when all this babbled shall have died out and become forgotten. So let us keep Christmas as merrily as ever, tempering our rejoicing with discretion and wisdom. Still, let us rejoice, remembering what event it is that we celebrate—the grandest event that ever occurred in the annals of the human race. An event that has coloured all history and penetrated with its influence all society; an event, too, which will achieve still greater conquests. Certain prophets of our day, whose inspiration we may doubt, augur dire evil in the future; but the Book whence we derive all our knowledge of Christianity prophesies a glorious future, and a modern psalmist—one John Milton—thus sings of the good time coming:—

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orb'd in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Thron'd in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

A Conservative paper formally announces that her Majesty's Ministers in Cabinet Council assembled have resolved to introduce no reform bill this Session. Thank you for nothing, Grandmamma! Who thought they would? Catch the noble Lord at the head of the Government meddling with Reform again. You might as soon expect to see him handle a red-hot poker. At the beginning of this Parliament—certain members of his Government having given pledges, and he having turned out the Conservatives because their Reform Bill was not satisfactory—he felt obliged to allow "Johnny," just for show, to present a little bill; but it was evident from the first that it was only for show—a mere sham. Not even the putative father of the measure hoped, if he wished, that it should grow to maturity. He introduced it in a melancholy, funeral style; spoke as if he had come to bury Caesar, not to praise him, as Sir Bulwer Lytton wittily said; and only altered his tone when the rickety bantering had fairly been kicked to death. Then, as we remember, he laughed merrily. In fact, we almost all laughed—Conservatives, Whigs, and some of the Radicals in their sleeve. No, no, Grandmamma; no thought of proposing a reform bill has ever entered the head of Lord Palmerston, you may be sure! Possibly—just possibly—Government may support Baines's bill, or Locke King's; for we want a cry, you see, and it may be that our clever Premier may support these measures, just to save the character of the party as Reformers and furnish them with a cry.

There is, however, clearly no earnest desire for reform. A late meeting at Bradford, with Mr. Baines, and Sir Francis Crossley, and Mr. Forster, and Mr. Stansfeld on the platform, seemed to me to be only a whistling for a wind. Mr. Stansfeld candidly confessed something very much like this. Here we are, said he, with sails set; but you working men must find the wind. At present, however, there are no signs of a breeze; the sails flap, the pennon laps itself round the mast, and there is not a cloud to be seen in the heavens. Very different all this to the stormy weather which we had when the Whigs whistled for a wind in 1830-1-2. Then we had a hurricane, a tornado, so violent that at last the whistlers themselves were alarmed. Clearly, then, we shall have no Parliamentary reform at present. It will come some day, this breeze. The masses, which are so provokingly quiet, will move when the hour arrives and the man—for, as Mrs. Browning sings,

It takes a soul
To move a body: It takes a high-souled man
To move the masses.

"But is not this the very time for the Government to propose a reform bill, when all is quiet?" I think I hear some philosopher say. "Are we never to give to the people their rights, until they are wrong from us by agitation and threats?" All which is beautiful theory—the very perfection of wisdom; and, if we could but get a Government composed of high-minded, far-seeing, unselfish statesmen, we might get this theory put into practice. But such Governments are exceedingly rare. Governments are very much like that old gentleman of whom we have all read, who—but I must quote the story, it is so pat to my purpose, and is such an exact picture of our Premier and his colleagues on this question. True, the story is taken from Scripture, but what then? The vulgar idea that Scripture ought not to be quoted in a newspaper, if it be not exploded, ought to be. Members quote Scripture now in the house. I must abridge the story, though. There was once a man who went to his friend at night and asked him for some bread, and got this reply:—"Trouble me not, the door is shut, my children are with me in bed, I cannot rise and give thee." This is the incident. But, mark! of this man it is written:—"He will not arise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him." The moral is easy. Palmerston is in a comfortable, cozy berth, and his children are with him; and, unless he be forced by importunity, will not move. And so, you see, if the working men want the suffrage they must demand it with importunity or they won't get it.

By-the-way, our Whig friend, Mr. Charles Buxton, has let the cat out of the bag. The Whigs for the most part have professed to be Reformers, and many of them stand pledged to support a large extension of the suffrage. But Mr. Charles Buxton, after pondering this matter till the fire burned, has exploded in a remarkable letter to the *Times*, which extended, if I mistake not, over three columns of the paper. The letter is very eloquent and scholarly, and shows that Mr. Buxton got a great deal more at Trinity College, Cambridge, than a mere classical and mathematical education, or else has sedulously cultured his mind since; for he quotes German and Italian as well as Greek. But, long, and learned, and eloquent as the letter is, the "tittle of the whole" may be easily summed up. Mr. Buxton sees that an extension of the suffrage will at no distant day become inevitable. He thinks, too, that it ought to be granted; but he is afraid that it will be terribly mischievous. In short, he lets

I dare not, wait upon I would,
Like the poor cat in the adage.

I will not quote his arguments. It is not necessary that I should do so; for they are very old. Just the very arguments which we used to hear from the lips of the old Tories—John Wilson Croker, Sir Charles Wetherell, the Earl of Winchester, old Lord Eldon—*et id genus omne*—in 1830-1-2, when it was proposed to enfranchise the tradesmen of towns and abolish rotten boroughs. These

gentlemen were horrified, struck all of a heap, when the £10 franchise in boroughs was proposed, and conjured up all imaginary horrors—boggies, ghosts, hobgoblins, raw heads, and bloody bones. "Trust the people with the franchise!" exclaimed a certain Mr. Bingham Baring; "the people (meaning the £10 householders) are no more to be trusted with power than children are to be trusted with edge tools." And then he likened the Commons to a man with one hand tied behind him. "The people," he said, "required that the hand be released, and the natural answer was 'No! he is a dangerous fellow, and is not to be trusted with the use of both his hands.'" Mr. Buxton then, whatever else he may be, is not original. He is a mere trader in secondhand Tory notions, which he has furnished up and fresh lacquered, and put in a modern setting to make them look like new. That Mr. Bingham Baring, by-the-by, is still in the House. In 1831 he sat for Callington, a borough which was abolished; and since the extinction of Callington he has represented Marlborough.

Our juvenile Premier has been lecturing his tenants about Romey on farming. In his rides round his estate he has noticed that some of the corn-fields, which ought to look only green at this time of year, show a brilliant yellow here, and he don't like the look of it. It is picturesque enough, this brilliant yellow, but the charlock, called carleek by the farmers, is a weed, which takes the room of corn and sucks away its nourishment, and is naturally offensive to the eye of an improving landlord like Lord Palmerston. And it is, moreover, discreditable to the farmers, this show of charlock, especially this year, when the unusually dry season has given rare opportunity to them to clean their land, and they deserve a wiggling. Let them set to work, then, and hoe it out, every plant of it, before it seeds, or they will have it doubled and trebled in quantity next year. It is marvellous that farmers should pay rent for land to grow weeds. I myself saw a field lately of which one half was occupied by this glaring yellow weed. I do not wonder that this waste of energy and ground annoyed his Lordship. But when I read his speech I could not help wishing that the weeds on the great State farm were as offensive to him as this charlock—that long list of pensioners which we find fattening on the Consolidated Fund, for example. I am afraid that most of them are mere weeds; as are some of the junior Lords, too, and certain excise and customs commissioners. And what a tall, offensive thistle is my Lord Ellenborough, with his £7000 a year for doing nothing! Our farm, though, under the culture of a reformed Parliament, has certainly improved—for example, we should not now tolerate such a weed as that which stared us in the face thirty-five years ago—Baroness—(I forget her name) *Sweeper of the Mall*, £340 a year.

Talking of farming reminds me that we shall have to settle the sewage question next Session. It is obvious that the sewage ought not to be wasted; but if it is to be thrown broadcast upon our grass-fields, I think with Mr. White, of Brighton, that "the incense-breathing morn" will become a mere poetic fiction. When I was by the seaside lately I got an anticipatory whiff of what may be very common, if care be not taken, as I passed some grass-fields on which rotten seaweed had been thrown. The streets of Cologne, immortalised by Byron for their stench, are fragrant as compared to these fields.

Messrs. Lock and Whitfield, the photographers, have lately completed a very beautiful set of miniatures of the Prince and Princess of Wales and their infant son, Prince Albert Victor; and had last week the honour of submitting these miniatures to the Queen, who was pleased to express her admiration of the manner in which they are executed.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

A few items must be noted, in the literature of the hour, which will not keep.

Mr. Beeton's *Christmas Annual* is an astonishing shilling's worth. I doubt if so much amusement can be got out of any other Christmas book for the same money—I am sure there cannot. Mr. Augustus Mayhew to write and Mr. Brunton to draw—there is a feast all complete, without a single dish besides. But there are heaps of dishes besides, and the whole entertainment is on the most lavish scale. Every delicacy of the season—cut and come again—eat what you like, much or little!

The Christmas number of *London Society* is also good; but, as usual, the illustrations (which are profusely numerous) are better than the letterpress. We haven't succeeded in laughing heartily over it. Now, a man is bound at Christmas either to make you laugh, or cry, or feel "creepy," but especially to make you laugh, if he tries at it. There is only one thing that will do instead of broad, bold fun—that sort of simple humour which is as innocent as a child's nightgown and as quiet as a child's slumber, and yet with a smack of mistletoe in it—say, a berry of mistletoe, to avoid the play upon the word "smack;" we didn't mean it.

The Christmas books are very late this year, and some presumably good ones have yet to appear. Thank Odin, Yule-tide lasts a long while after Christmas Day!

Have you seen the new Shakespeare—the Globe edition, in one volume, issued by Macmillan? I think it is the most precious bit of cheapness ever published. Buy it, and you will never regret it, to the longest day you live.

I see Mr. Kingsley (major) is in the field again. In January he begins, in *Good Words*, a new romance—a romance of the fen district—"Hereward, the Last of the English." The title is alarming, and "the Last of the English" would hardly be good words, in one sense; but, *pax sit rebus*, it will all come right. Hereward is only the scapegrace son of our old friend, Lady Godiva, who, appropriately enough, sends him to Coventry in the first instalment of the story. Will he challenge Peeping Tom in the last? I don't know, but I'll wager Mr. Kingsley does not get through ten pages without one of his characteristic suggestions of—the Beautiful in Primeval Robes. What's bred in the bone will never come out of the flesh.

CHRISTMAS PROSPECTS.

"I WOULD I were a boy again," that I might enjoy the various "treats" offered by managers of public exhibitions, theatres, &c., with proper youthful gusto. The boys and girls of the present day see life in a roseate hue, such as no boy or girl of twenty or fifteen years ago conceived, after reading the "Arabian Nights." What were public exhibitions then? The orrery—the heavenly bodies revolving in their various orbits round a sun three inches in diameter—surprisingly wonderful, but slow; a pantomime, and nothing more—I mean no more purchaseable amusement. Of course, there were private parties, where dancing-pumps were worn, and for which your hair was curled with the tongs by a barber; but now, "in these days of enlightenment," as the lecturers say, children are embarrassed by the riches showered down before their eyes.

The admission to nearly every exhibition is one shilling. In one sovereign, as our young friends are aware, there are twenty shillings, and for twenty shillings, spent separately, what may they not see? There is the Crystal Palace, in itself a marvel, just now embellished by the presence of Commodore Nutt, Miss Minnie Warren, the betrothed of Commodore Nutt; General Tom Thumb, the "anticipated" brother-in-law of Commodore Nutt; Mrs. General Tom Thumb, sister to Miss Minnie Warren; and, last and not least, Miss General Tom Thumb, the daughter of General Tom Thumb and Mrs. General Tom Thumb, niece to Miss Minnie Warren, the betrothed of Commodore Nutt, and "anticipated" niece to that naval Commodore. What a wonderful country is America—the land of Niagara and General Tom Thumb! I sometimes wonder that the great Barnum—that Caesar of showmen—has not explored the Horseshoe Fall, and "given the public of Eu-rope an opportunity of witnessing this most stupendous effort of Nature at the science of hydraulics. Exhibitions twice per diem, at three and eight. Families and schools attended!"

But this is digression. I need not enumerate the many wonderful twelve-penn'orths of joy procurable in London at this festive season of cough and chilblain; nor need I say what wonderful burlesques

and pantomimes beneficent London managers—fat male fairies, with walking-sticks for wands—are preparing for their juvenile clientele. So, for the moment the finger of curiosity is pointed at the thumbs—*Parlons donc des Ponces!*

On Monday, at the Crystal Palace, the General, the General's lady, the Commodore, and his intended, appeared in front of the Handel orchestra, and about four thousand persons of the average size and weight gave way to enthusiasm. The Crystal Palace is a building well adapted for enthusiasm; the roof is high and the directors are enterprising—Garibaldi, volunteer prize distributions, monster Mozart meetings, are all triumphs under the transept. The baby—who, by-the-way, is a young lady baby, and thirteen months old—"receives" in a room leading from the Egyptian Court. When I say "receives," it must be understood that I do not mean nourishment, but society. This presentation costs an extra sum. What crime this unfortunate infant, during the few months of her brief existence, can have committed, that she should be so kissed and squeezed as she was on Monday last I am at a loss to imagine. The fair sex are sometimes cruel in the pursuit of pleasure, and to undergo the pressure of the lips of hundreds is enough to drive any baby—even a baby weaned by Barnum—mad. Is there no Act of Parliament for the prevention of cruelty to babes in arms?

All the ladies who were "presented" expressed astonishment at the infant's size. "What a little darling!" they said. "What little eyes!" "So little—isn't it?" Did they suppose that the daughter of General and Mrs. Thumb would be the height of Ascarbat?

The only dramatic news is that Mr. Sothorn has achieved another success at Liverpool, in a new comedy, by Mr. Watts Phillips.

THE VILLAGE ALEHOUSE AT CHRISTMAS.

THERE are worse methods of inaugurating Christmas than that of starting out for a brisk walk into the country after a short railway journey which carries the pedestrian to a point beyond the last straggling houses of suburban streets.

For such an excursion—say on Christmas Eve—there are a dozen places which offer almost equal claims to the Londoner, who, without too great a sacrifice of time, desires to attune his mind and invigorate his body by a glimpse of pure nature and a steady tramp in the fresh air of the open fields. But, amongst them all, there are two localities that are peculiarly dear to the experienced traveller, because they have special duties for every season of the year. The charming landscape of which Knowle is the centre, and the soft undulating country which lies about Chiselhurst, with all its variety of breezy common, sweet hedgerow, arable and woodland, are the most delightful haunts to the sagacious half-holiday maker, whether his brief leisure fall in spring, summer, autumn, or winter. The tender green which first begins to clothe the grand old trees and tint the fields in the earlier months, and the full, joyous plenitude of summer foliage, have each a charm, which is but an exquisite contrast to the riper glories of autumn, when the woods are rich in glowing colours and the golden corn waves, mellowing, in the sun. But there is a new delight in the wonderful transformations of winter, too. Those strange, weird old trees, whose trunks are full of mysteries and whose outspreading limbs are gnarled and warped into a hundred fantastic shapes, have been full of interest while the last red brown leaves yet quivered on their topmost sprays; but see them now, all hung with a glittering film of fairy tracery, the white snow lying in dazzling patches in their great clefts, and long rows of ice-gems threaded from every twig and vanishing one by one as the sun lights them. Go boldly on, with reasonable precaution and not without "clumped boots," into the dells where but three months ago the lush-grass grew thickly and the furze came nearly breast high; and if you have a companion (as you should have), do not disdain snowballs. The bracing air and the free, open country (the sense of dead stillness notwithstanding) will make you long to shout with pure enjoyment. It will do you good to shout, so raise your voice with a will, in a whoop of grateful exultation, and, should you feel, like Mr. Pickwick, that, if anybody offered you a back, you would like a game of leap-frog, ask somebody to "tuck in their twopenny" and "keep the pot boiling" till you are aglow with increased circulation.

Should you follow these judicious suggestions and afterwards walk on with a vigorous determination to return to town by way of Lewisham, you may as well take the short cut, and that will lead you through some country lanes pretty stiff with clay; having recovered from which, you will, unless you are "an abstainer," which is scarcely probable, feel that a glass of good ale would not be the worst kind of refreshment. By this time you may have come upon the outskirts of a little village, where, if you are particularly fortunate, you may see a labourer, or a tramp, or a wandering tinker; and if, with a laudable desire for information, you inquire of such a person where you can obtain the desired refreshment, he will say, "Why, it's mostly to Jack's that people goes hereabouts." Should you pursue the subject by any inquiry as to the identity of Jack's, you will learn that it is Brockley Jack's, of course; and as "It's close by, and precious sharp weather somehow makes yer feel thirsty like," the "price of a pint" cannot be reasonably expected "either to make you or break you; which here you are, with the name wrote on a bladebone," though whether a real bone or not your informant "aint rightly certain, but it's a big 'un if it is real, that's all."

Now, supposing it to be Christmas Eve—or, for the matter of that, almost any other eve in the year—you are not likely to learn much about either Brockley Jack or the great bladebone, because there are so many people in front of the bar that there is quite enough to do to draw beer for them, without answering questions. Conjecture, however, may be amusing; and Jack may be an embodiment of half the fairy tales of your youth. He may have turned his attention to the licensed victualling after the destruction of the giant and the final removal of the bean-stalk to Kew Gardens. This may be the identical house that Jack built; and, if so, it's a pity that he didn't build it larger, though probably he was very much harassed at the time with the unscrupulous conduct of the man all tattered and torn, and his final consummation by the priest all shaven and shorn, who evidently had no fear of ecclesiastical law before his eyes. More wonderful still, is this really the humble retirement of that killer of giants, who, being a native of Brockley, forewent the hollow splendour of a Court, and in the seclusion of a village alehouse only commemorated his early prowess by using the bladebone of the defunct Blunderbore as a sign? "If you've finished your ale, Sir, I'll trouble you to move, for it's time for us to shut up, and you'll only just catch the last train to town."

CONVICT NOTABILITIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.—At Fremantle the visitor is sure to fall in with Redpath—now on his ticket of leave—a tall man of good address, living on the proceeds of sundry small shipments of fancy goods consigned to him by English friends. Redpath has always maintained a position above the ordinary class of ticket-holders. Even in prison he never made his own bed nor cleaned out his cell. These menial offices were performed by some obsequious convict anxious for the reward of the great man's smile—a reward not unfrequently but judiciously bestowed. Now that he is at large, ticket-holders touch their hats to their distinguished brother, who promenades the streets, writes clever letters under a *nom de guerre* to the local press, is the founder and honorary secretary of the Working Men's Association, and is specially shunned by the free classes, who profess to regard him as a social agitator. At Fremantle, also, there resides a remarkable individual, who found it necessary in England to dissolve his marriage contract by the simple but effective operation of cutting off his wife's head. He now fills a highly respectable situation. Not deterred by his matrimonial mishap, he has taken to himself a second wife, to console him during his long sojourn in the land, and he is now bringing up a numerous family. Robson, who is also at large, does not receive at all a good character. He lost one or two situations as a Perth through his own misconduct. After this he went into business as a photographer, and now he keeps an academy, while the colonial Mrs. Robson assists him with a preparatory school. Next to dissipation, Robson's principal recreation seems to be poetical effusions, in which duty obtain publicity through the medium of the Perth newspapers. In guilty of an unblushing appropriation of their verses. As Byron and Gray do not appear, however, to be "familiar as household words" in Western Australia, Robson enjoys a great reputation as an utterer of "thoughts that breathe and words that burn."—*Melbourne Argus*.

THE OPERA AND NEW MUSIC.

THE great operatic news of the day is that Donato of the one leg is about to appear at the Royal English Opera. After being hired by one theatrical speculator, he has been sub-let to another, and the unfortunate man will make his first hop before a British audience at Covent Garden, on Boxing Night. We call him "unfortunate;" but there are probably many two-legged dancers who would gladly find themselves in his position; and if Donato meets with anything like the success which the believers and speculators in him anticipate, one-legged dancing will become fashionable, and we shall hear of aspirants to Terpsichorean honours submitting to amputation as an indispensable preliminary to distinction in their art. In the meanwhile we may observe that the theory of one-legged dancing (whatever the practice may be) is by no means new. One of Molière's doctors, or rather one of Molière's servant-girls disguised as a doctor, announces and explains at some length that a new system of surgery has been discovered, by which, when the eyes are weak, one eye is extinguished, that the patient may see better with the other; when the legs are weak, one leg is cut off, that in the remaining one may be condensed the strength of two. Perhaps, without knowing it, Donato is an illustration of the truth of the theory advanced by Molière in ridicule of medical and surgical theories generally, or, at least, of those of his time. The strength of the leg left by Donato on the field of Solferino may have passed into the one with which he is about to dance, on Monday night, on the boards of Covent Garden.

Both the English Opera are to give pantomimes this winter; and an advertisement has just been shown to us from which it appears the one-legged mania has already begun, and that the hero of the pantomime at Her Majesty's Theatre is to be a one-legged clown. After Christmas, our two national opera-houses will each have one leg to stand upon. They certainly need support of some kind.

Seriously, is it not strange that, after all the talk we have heard of late about the progress of musical art and the increase of musical taste in England, it should still be impossible to keep an operatic theatre going in London during the winter months without having recourse to pantomime as an indispensable adjunct during about half the time? From October to Christmas it is notorious that an English operatic theatre (even when only one is open) will barely pay its expenses. Indeed, the manager may consider himself fortunate if he does not lose money. At Christmas, and for some weeks afterwards, he may expect to have good houses; but this depends altogether upon the attractiveness of the pantomime, to which, at Christmas time, everything else is sacrificed. When the "run" of the pantomime is over, the manager will probably have made enough money to be able to submit with a good grace to some slight losses in the cause of English opera. But, on the whole, the post-pantomimic is better than the pre-pantomimic season; and if the period devoted to English opera, instead of finishing, as it generally does, in March, were to be continued through a portion, at least, of the London season, some share of that patronage which is now reserved exclusively for Italian opera might perhaps be bestowed upon it. As it is, and speaking generally, English opera is a losing speculation, except when it is supported (and altogether eclipsed) by pantomime. Both Covent Garden and Her Majesty's Theatre will, no doubt, be filled to overflowing during the next few weeks; but ask the juvenile patrons whether they like "Helvellyn" or "Love's Ransom" best, and they will no doubt reply that they prefer the pantomime.

Under pretence of fostering native musical talent our English operatic managers bring out pantomimes. But they are really obliged to do this, or our native musical talent would ruin them. One way and another, a great deal has been done of late years both for English singers and English composers; and we cannot see that anyone but the singers and composers themselves have much profited by it. What composer is there, or what singer, who has not yet had his or her chance? The two or three composers who for some considerable time had been known as authors of unrepresented operas have either had their works brought out during the last few years or are about to have them brought out now. As for the singers, every facility for appearing before the public seems to have been given to those who had previously had no opportunity of making their talent (or want of talent) known; but, in proportion to the number engaged, very few indeed have made any real impression on the public. In spite of the persistent search that has been made after new vocal talent, Miss Louisa Pyne, M^{me}. Lemmens-Sherrington, M^{me}. Parepa, Mr. Santley, and Mr. Sims Reeves remain our best singers; and, after all the trials that have been given to new composers (new, at least, to the stage), the public are beginning to think that all the new and untried composers together are not worth their old favourites, Balfe and Wallace. There was a good deal of grumbling, last year and the year before, at the regular manner in which Mr. Balfe's operas succeeded those of Mr. Wallace and Mr. Wallace's those of Mr. Balfe. It was said that the Balfe and Wallace style had become hackneyed, and that there were numbers of other composers who only wanted a chance (or only one chance more) to convince the public of their superiority to both Wallace and Balfe. Now Balfe and Wallace seem both to be under an anathema. Their names have not been mentioned, either in the programmes of Her Majesty's Theatre or in that of the Royal English Opera Company. We have had operas by Macfarren and Hatton, and, after Christmas, we are to have operas by Gounod ("Le Médecin malgré lui"), Felicien David ("Lallah Rookh"), Henry Leslie, and Frank Mori; but not a word of any work by Mr. Balfe or Mr. Wallace. Yet, somehow or other, it used to happen that when an opera by one of those two (temporarily) despised composers was brought out, people would flock every night to hear it—sometimes for a hundred nights together. On the other hand, we find that Mr. Macfarren's new opera of "Helvellyn" was only played once last week, and Mr. Hatton's new opera of "Love's Ransom" also only once—the other four nights being given up to the "Trovatore."

The present English opera season will probably be known, not to posterity, but to the playgoers of the next three or four years, as the anti-Balfe and Wallace season. But, if managers are weak enough to set their faces against Balfe and Wallace simply because those composers had become far more popular than all their numerous competitors, they will soon find that it will not answer their purpose, as commercial speculators, to bring out English operas at all.

NEW MUSIC.

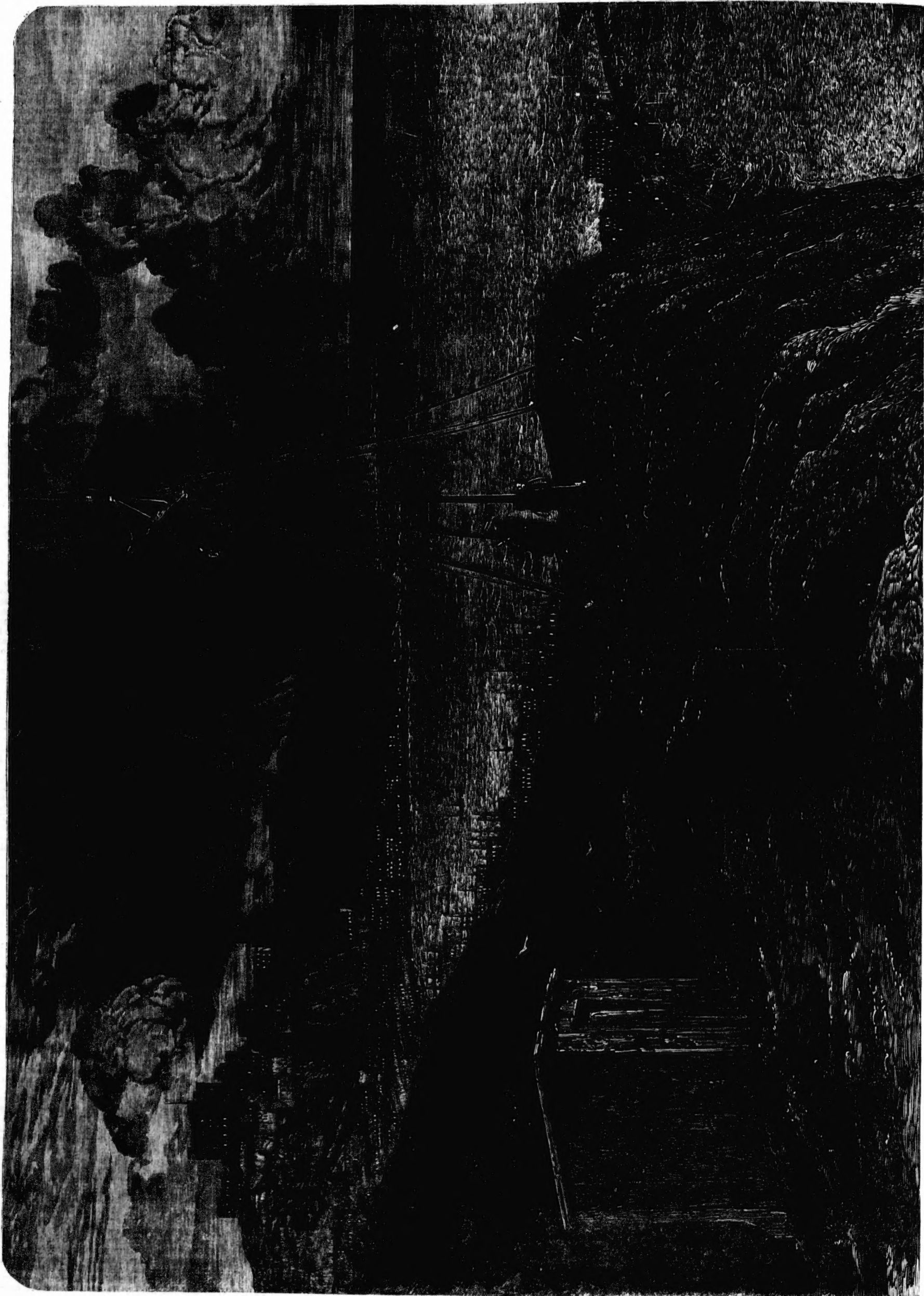
Christmas brings with it the usual number of musical albums, and of pieces specially adapted for performance at Christmas time—as mince-pies and plum-puddings are supposed to be specially adapted for Christmas eating.

Messrs. Brewer and Co. have published a juvenile album containing fifty-one nursery-songs, adapted to familiar tunes by George Linley.

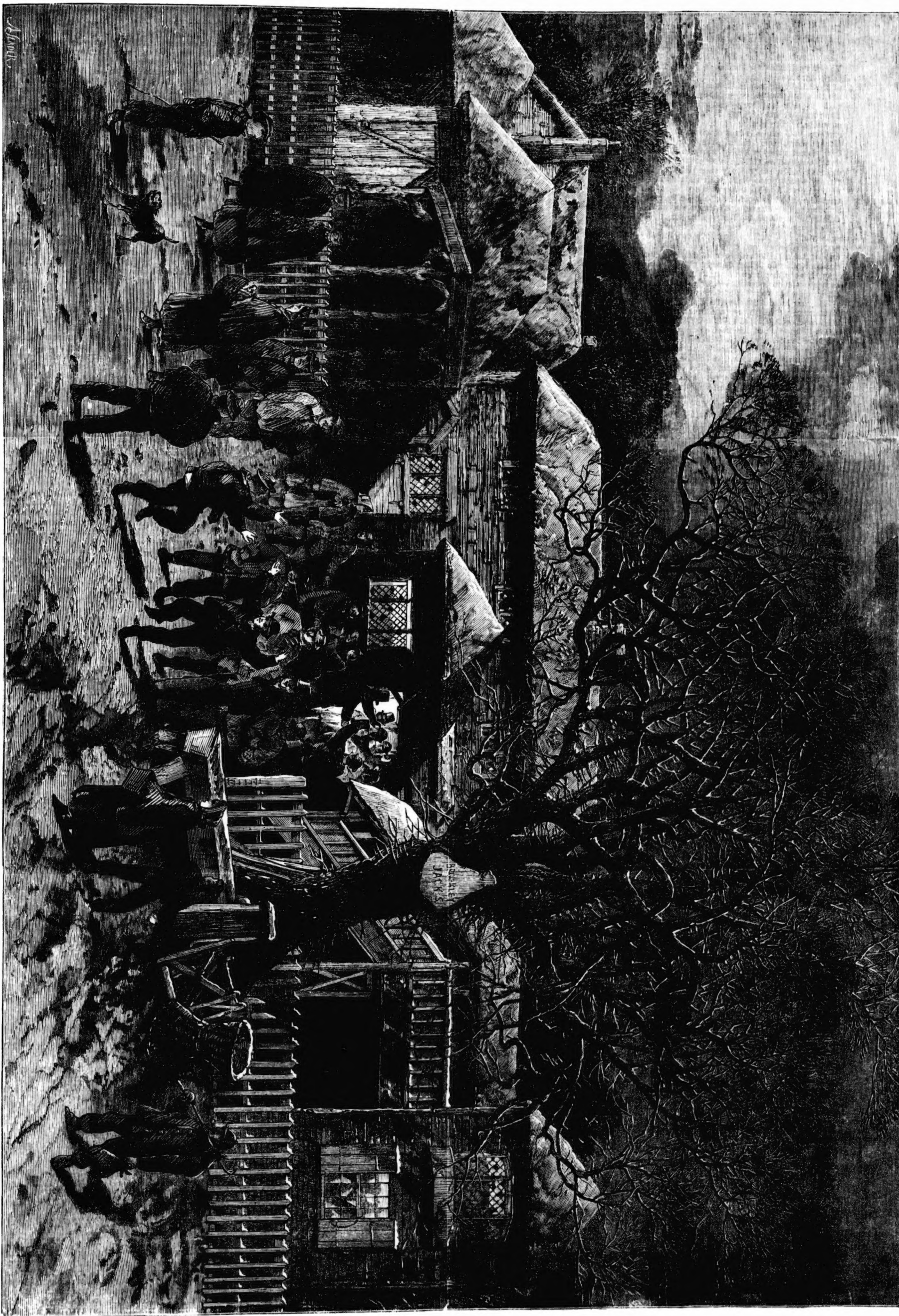
Mr. Duncan Davison has brought out a quantity of new music, not only for Christmas Day (which, it should be remembered, falls on a Sunday this year), but also for New-Year's Day (also on Sunday and a non-musical day). "Christmas," "New-Year's Eve," "Sunday at Home," "Easter," are four pieces for the pianoforte by W. Holmes. "The Christmas Rose" is a song by Lovell Phillips; "Christmas Time has come at Last," a song by G. Neville.

Mr. Cocks has produced a number of "fashionable quadrilles for the season;" among others, "The Streets of Paris," "The Davenport," "The Little Prince," "The Copenhagen," and "The Dundreary."

The *Musical Scrap-Book* (Boosey and Co.) may be described, in the words of its own preface, as "a very extensive and varied collection of vocal and pianoforte music, issued in a compact form and at a low price;" and as "a work in which something suitable can be found for every taste, every voice, and every pair of hands." Balfe, Hatton, Kücken, Prince Albert, Molique, Clapissin, Auber, &c., are among the vocal; and Alfred Mellon, Beethoven, Brinley Richards, George Osborne, Handel, Wellington Guernsey, Weber, Flotow, Verdi, and the Christy Minstrels among the instrumental composers whose works have been laid under contribution for the benefit of "The Musical Scrap-Book."



THE STORM-SIGNAL MAN ON SHAKESPEARE'S CLIFF ON CHRISTMAS EVE.—(DRAWN BY P. SKELTON.)—SEE PAGE 403.



THE VILLAGE INN DOOR ON CHRISTMAS EVE.—(DRAWN BY A. J. M.)—SEE PAGE 407.

Literature.

The Stealing of the Princes Ernest and Albert of Saxony (from the former of whom the Prince of Wales traces his descent). Illustrated with numerous highly-finished Engravings. Ward and Lock.

The story of the *Prinzenraub* is known from one end of Europe to the other; and since it is in itself one of the most exciting stories of the middle ages, and stands, besides, in direct relation to the most august family circle in these islands, it is matter of wonder that it has so long remained untold in all its fulness. Previous writers found it an anecdote, and left it as an anecdote. The author of the book before us has told it as a romance. Such a romance for the young we do not know. Conspirators, rope ladders, midnight thieves, gloomy old castles, dark forest rides, a hiding away in a cave, a manifold chase, a double rescue, a terrible vengeance, these are surely the very elements of a story for young people. And that the story is "true"—that great point with such readers—is a mighty recommendation. Add to these points one or two more; for instance, that the author has contrived, incidentally, to give a great deal of information about mediæval times, and that there are about forty admirable woodcuts to illustrate the text, and we have made out a case for the *Story of the Princes* as a gift-book for the young, such as cannot, perhaps, be made out for any other story of the season. We shall assuredly give it to our own children, and shall expect to see them devour it greedily, and waste much good drawing-paper in trying to copy the illustrations. These, by-the-way, have either been taken from authentic originals, or, where scenery was in question—castle, church, or landscape—from drawings made upon the spot.

The four hundredth anniversary of the *Prinzenraub* was celebrated in Germany, at Altenburg and in the neighbourhood, in July, 1855. The event took place in 1455, and just after the battle of St. Albans. As an illustration of life in Germany in the most stirring period of the later middle age, the whole narrative is extremely interesting, with its glimpses of old traditions, and John Huss, and the Black Death, and Bohemian wars, and the Vehm-gerichte, and the looming Reformation. With respect to the Vehm-gerichte, we observe that the author has avoided errors into which Sir Walter Scott and others have fallen in referring to them, and has accurately suggested their manner of meeting; but we do not know what authority he has for his reading of the mystical S. S. G. of the order. His version of the "curse," or death-sentence, of the Holy Vehm is terrible enough; but the rhythmic artifice of the manner takes off the rawness. In general, we may observe the author appears to have a knack of writing musically, which bespeaks a pen practised in minding its liquids and its open vowels. His worst fault is, perhaps, an evident unwillingness to "cut the painter;" but, if he will excuse the paradox, he would paint a better picture if he would "let go" a little more. He need not, for all that, part with any of his bright simplicity of manner, or cease to be idiomatic. That he is so is one point in his favour. Parents who are honourably jealous over the sort of English it is desirable their children should talk, will find in this book no such phrases as "severed his head" or "directed his attention." This writer would say, point-blank, "chopped off his head" and "turned his eye."

There is in this story some very innocent love-making, which seems to have a "relation of cohesion," as the critics say, to the rest of the story; but the pretty Guta and Mad Anna will both be new to the general reader. It does not appear whether the miracle-play at Naumburg fair, and the two legends which enter into the narrative, are matters of record, or are invented; nor does it concern us, for they help the colouring, and do not alter the facts.

It is difficult to select an appropriate passage from a book of so very varied a character; but here is an exciting situation:—

THE BODY ON THE THRESHOLD.

Was it Guta's piteous, or her breath, or the wind through a slit in the turret side, that blew out the Fool's torch? Perhaps it was the breath of the night that came through that long, narrow slit, after all. Guta had been looking out of it for a few seconds, and had then taken suddenly to running down the stone stairs, like one pursued. What could the Fool do? She ran like a deer; and, in the windings of the stairs—to say nothing of the pause he had made on the upper steps, just in mere surprise—the man soon found himself in partial darkness. Long before he had reached the bottom, Guta had slipped out into the courtyard by a postern door. A man's body, dead or sleeping, or what not, lay upon the threshold. Over it she stepped, scarcely heeding the thing, alive or not, that lay in her path; certainly not staying for it. Down went the torch, and her right hand was free. She laid it firmly on the neck of Ernest's hound, and held it back, just as it was in the act of springing at the throat of a man who stood, armed and masked, in the moonlight. With the other hand Guta half raised his mask. A low sound, half horror, half anxiety, came from her lips. She pressed close to the man, whispered to him a single sentence, and pushed him away with a strong thrust. He was gone out of sight in a few seconds.

In the meanwhile, the Fool was, of course, at her heels. He had stumbled over the man that lay upon the threshold, but his first business was to pick up the still-flaming pine-torch that Guta had flung down and confront her, as she now stood, white as death, patting the dog—the dog that was growling out a low, gurgling bass of disappointment. But Guta had turned her keen young eye upon the threshold of the postern door, and had seen distinctly that it was the body of a man that lay there.

In conclusion, we can only repeat that, as a romantic story, pure in tone, real in interest, and full of incidental instruction, this handsome book seems to us to take a high place. It has a quaint dedication to the infant Prince Albert Victor of Wales; and it is something to read a book which, in all probability, that "little Christian" will glance over when he is big enough to read it.

The Englishwoman in India. By a LADY RESIDENT. Smith, Elder, and Co.

The value of advice given gratis cannot be thoroughly appreciated by anybody who has not once been going to India. From the moment that the announcement is made the information spreads, and from every possible quarter the advice comes pouring in. Everybody knows better than everybody else the proper season for your departure, and what things you require for the journey. They become not only learned, which would not matter—but communicative, which does—on the rainy season. They teach the difference between punkahs and pajamas—the wrong way, probably; and, in short, give themselves so very much trouble that all their labours are considerably worse than useless. All such people should be avoided. They should be kept in darkness until the last minute, when they have their astonished hands shaken at the railway-station.

In place of advice gratis, a "Lady Resident" comes to the rescue of all ladies proceeding to or residing in the East Indies, on the subjects of their outfit, furniture, housekeeping, the rearing of children, duties and wages of servants, management of the stables, and arrangements for travelling. All this appears to be given conscientiously; and, here and there, with such confidential hints that the book is made amusing enough for any afternoon's reading. Moreover, although professedly designed for ladies, there are plenty of half pages concerning the gentlemen, who appear to be very important objects of interest with "lady residents." But whilst this book may be warmly recommended to all ladies going to India, it is not improbable that it may have the effect of keeping many intending travellers at home. There are certain unpleasantnesses to be endured. Thus, "in buying dining-room chairs, a certain proportion should be without arms for ladies." A thousand frightful thoughts rush through the mind. Do ladies eat so very much in India? Is there no Oriental Banting? Or is it, after all, simply for the sake of crinoline that the chairs are to be unarmed? because, if so, the rule would apply equally to chairs at home, and need not be pointed out as an Indian peculiarity. Again, footstools are almost always used, as they keep the feet out of the way of scorpions, centipedes, &c.; but this, we trust, may be confined to some savage, outlying stations in the Madras Presidency, to which the lady's experiences seem to have been confined. The chapter on servants is especially interesting, and offers some strange contrasts to English manners. Amongst

the dark domestics there must be a "dog-boy," who "attends to the dog or dogs, also to cats; boils their food, washes them, and takes dogs out to walk." Cats, of course, can be trusted out by themselves, never less than two together. The servants appear to be "the greatest plague of life" in the East as well as at home. The lady resident gives a little advice on the subject, in somewhat powerful language:—"As much as possible, secure for your servants a set of unmitigated heathens. Converts are usually a set of arrant humbugs; Catholics little better; indeed, the domestics who have robbed and cheated us during our sojourn in India have, with one exception, been Christians, and I have resolved never to engage another knowing him to be 'master's caste.'" But nothing better could be expected from a class of people who look upon ladies with contempt. They think that nothing can be too good for the master, whilst anything is good enough for the mistress. There is told an instance of a boy remonstrating with the mistress, at breakfast, about her taking, by accident, a particular egg:—"That our fowl egg; that for master. Others, bazaar eggs; good for missis." Surely, after this, all fair readers will prefer their fifty years of Europe to a cycle of Cathay. But those who make the venture should secure this volume as a preliminary. In addition to the information already described, there are just a hundred pages devoted to Indian cookery.

The Story of the Life of George Stephenson, including a Memoir of his Son, Robert Stephenson. By SAMUEL SMILES. A New Edition. John Murray.

James Brindley and the Early Engineers. By SAMUEL SMILES. Abridged from "Lives of the Engineers." John Murray.

These two volumes are, as the titlepages explain, not exactly new books, but yet they have points of novelty which will secure for them a fresh welcome. They are now printed in post octavo, and so range with Mr. Smiles's "Self-Help" and "Industrial Biography."

"The Life of George Stephenson" has undergone some important changes. The present edition is described as "revised and improved." It was first published in 1857, but since that time Mr. Smiles has received much additional information about the early days of railways and about the principal men connected with them, and all this has been carefully distributed over the early chapters, which have therefore original freshness and force. Up to the time of his decease Mr. Robert Stephenson neglected no opportunity of adding to Mr. Smiles's stock of information about his father, and so the work has improved, edition by edition. In a way which will be readily understood, very much of Robert Stephenson's life became mixed up with that of his father. They worked together, and their biographies became intertwined. In the present volume Mr. Smiles has taken advantage of this, and has completed the life, or what may be described as a brief memoir, of Robert Stephenson, which makes the work more satisfactory still. For "further details," which, however, would be of an engineering rather than a biographic character, the reader is referred to the "Lives of the Engineers." But the facts embodied in the account of George Stephenson's invention (in the third volume), prepared by Robert Stephenson, are embodied in the text of the present volume, which, although somewhat condensed, is of course perfect as a biographical narrative.

"James Brindley and the Early Engineers" is a most interesting companion to the Stephenson volume. It may almost be described as the story of canals against the story of railroads. Brindley is the principal feature, but other chapters have great importance. An introductory chapter describes "all about" the draining of Romney Marsh, a track now so isolated that the marshmen declare the world to be divided into Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Romney Marsh. The Romans may have embanked the Thames, then an estuary several miles wide between London and Gravesend; but the records of the Board of Works of the period are wanting. Sir Cornelius Vermeyden and the drainage of the fens is modern, and may be relied on; also, Sir Hugh Myddelton and the New River, Captain Perry and Dagenham Reach, &c.; and then follow several chapters devoted to Brindley and the English system of canals. The volume appropriately closes with an account of the French engineer Pierre Paul Riquet, the constructor of the Grand Canal of Languedoc, a memoir which has hitherto only appeared in the French edition.

These two volumes are good, sound pieces of workmanship, and teach some of the best qualities of humanity in a plain and sensible style. They are so well known that it was only necessary to describe the present improvements which have been made and to recommend the new editions in a handsome, but cheap and accessible, form.

Merry Songs for Little Voices. By FRANCES FREELING BRODERIP and THOMAS HOOD. Set to Music by Thomas Murby. With Forty Illustrations. Griffith and Farran.

This volume of songs for young singers is an excellent idea. To teach music and poetry to children, in moderation, will soon be found by them as amusing as the ordinary recreations of the play-hour; but it will never do to abandon hoop and ball, although if mud pies go out of fashion the present juvenile generation will surely be none the worse. Mr. Hood and his sister, Mrs. Broderip, have written some forty little songs, which are well adapted to the purpose. They are always poetic, but perfectly infantine in thought and expression. Mr. Murby has arranged for them some pretty music, which, like the words, will be found adapted to range over an early half dozen years of a child's life. Mr. Hood also supplies an illustration to each, quaintly drawn, and frequently with very nice effect when dealing with children, butterflies, or flowers. The whole forms a handsome book of music in small quarto; and, as the voice cannot be cultivated too soon, it may hope for an early home in many warm corners, where the initiated will gladly teach the musical notes to the little ones.

The Domestic Service Guide. Lockwood and Co.

This is one of the most copious and perfect household handbooks—perhaps the most—that has ever appeared. From housekeeper to gardener, every domestic servant, including lady's lady and gentleman's gentleman, have a goodly space afforded them to teach them their duties and how to profit by them. Necessarily it contains all the essentials of a cookery-book; but its chief object is to teach servants how to become good servants; and, whilst this is done, nothing like eternal slavery is contemplated. On the contrary, "Jeames" and "Dolly Mop" are assured that if they will but economise time and work cheerfully they will find plenty of time for themselves. Householders will do well to purchase the "Domestic Service Guide" and do a little of Mr. Mudie's work on their own account, so far as the servants' hall is concerned. It may be as well to add that many of the pages, especially those on the *valet*, are very amusingly written.

THE CLIFTON SUSPENSION BRIDGE.—The description of this structure which appeared in our columns on the 10th inst. was derived mainly from a very clever and interesting pamphlet on the subject lately published by Messrs. J. Wright and Co., of Bristol. Those of our readers who wish to obtain more full details of the history and construction of one of the most stupendous and interesting undertakings of the day, would do well to obtain Messrs. Wright's pamphlet, in which every fact of importance will be found stated in a lucid and graphic manner.

THE VERMONT RAID.—When the war broke out, says an American paper, Lieutenant Young was a theological student in Kentucky, and engaged to be married to a young lady of very respectable parents. During some of the warlike operations there the residence of his intended father was fired and entirely consumed. The young lady received a shock from which she never recovered. She died soon after; how and in what manner we know not. Young threw aside his theological books and donned the Confederate uniform, expecting and willing to lose his life in the service. Hence his appearance in St. Albans to murder, burn, and plunder.

MATTHEWS, the now well-known cabman, has been before the Bankruptcy Court. He was opposed by some of his creditors; but the Registrar ordered his release from custody, remarking, with regard to the money he expected in the affair of Mr. Briggs's murder, that if application was made to Scotland-yard Matthews's share in the reward would no doubt be assigned for the benefit of his creditors.

PHARRONIDA.

FIRST PART.

I.

LITTLE PHARRONIDA was the daughter of a crossing-sweeper, who had been left a widower, with no one but her. While her mother lived she had heard a great many fairy tales, which so filled her head that nothing would satisfy her in all the world but to be a fairy queen. Her kind father (for many crossing-sweepers are kind) used to say to her "My Pharronida, you will never be a fairy; you will have to fill a nurse-girl's place, or take in plain needlework." This only made Pharronida shake her little head; and, at last, her father made a law that she should have no more butter on her bread (for some crossing-sweepers live very well) until she agreed to give up the idea of being a fairy. This law was carried out quite strictly up to Saturday night, except that on Wednesday she had some beef dripping; but on Saturday night, her father, seeing how sad and silent she was, gave her some bread-and-butter, cut thin, and put some sugar on, to make it up completely. This made Pharronida cry, especially when she found the butter was fresh, and knew her kind father had bought it on purpose. However, she got between his knees, and said,

"Father, I want you to give me a penny."

"Yes, my dear Pharronida," said he; "and you can buy what you like with it. I know a shop where they sell fairy tales a penny each."

But on the Monday, when he came home to dinner from his crossing, he saw that Pharronida had bought for a penny a bill, upon which was written "Plain Needlework Taken in Here." This she had stuck in the window with a wafer, split into four.

"Tush!" said he, when he saw the bill; "you are too young, yet. Whoever heard of a girl of nine years old taking in needlework?" So he kissed her, and they had some hot soup together for that day's dinner. For all that, he caught a cold in the afternoon, standing in a heavy shower, and in a very few days he died. Before that happened, however, he said to his daughter,

"Pharronida, if I die, you will find under the bed-tick, on the right-hand side, a stocking-full of money. It contains seventy-three pounds, fourteen shillings, and sixpence-halfpenny."

Then the little girl began to cry; but a ray of sunshine slanted through the window, right down upon her beautiful hair, and her father smiled and said,

"Oh, my fairy-queen!"

And then he died. Some ill-conditioned persons get angry when they find that crossing-sweepers save money; but, as long illnesses and old bones happen to scavengers as well as other people, I do not myself see why they should not save money. Neither, considering the disrespectful way in which a crossing-sweeper is liable to be treated by the vulgar, do I see why he should not have a fairy for a daughter, by way of making things more even.

II.

Shortly after her father's death, Pharronida began to think she must do some plain needlework for a living, in spite of the stocking-full of money, which she found all right, exactly as her father had told her, except that one of the pennies was bad. This bad penny had, no doubt, been given him by the same shabby old man who always puts bad halfpennies into the plate on Christmas Day, when there is a collection for the poor in our parish. I know him quite well, and intend to expose him if he does not, after this warning, desist from his nefarious practices.

But it came across the mind of little Pharronida that her father's last words had been, "Oh, my fairy-queen!" and, after much consideration, she resolved to fulfil her destiny, in obedience to his dying command. So she went out into the streets, intending to purchase a fairy-book, which might give her the proper information; but, on her way to the shop where such things were sold, she passed a theatre, on the door of which was a bill, bearing, in large letters, the words

GRAND FAIRY PANTOMIME.

This appeared to the mind of Pharronida a very providential occurrence, and she immediately said to herself, "I will become a fairy at once, for this must be the place; though what a pantomime is I do not know, unless it means factory. Yes, that is what it must mean. They make little girls into fairies in this place, and I shall soon have wings growing out of my shoulders, and be able to turn a pumpkin into a coach-and-six, like Cinderella's godmother."

Thinking these things, and feeling very happy at the thought of them, Pharronida knocked hard at the door several times. But nobody answered, and at last she began to cry, and to fancy she would never be a fairy after all. And, as her hands had got dirty thumping against the nasty panels, she smutted her face when she put her hands up to wipe her eyes. At last one of the passers-by told her not to stand knocking there, but to go round to the stage-door. This she did, and saw a man with a book before him, in which he seemed ready to write down names; and to him she said, very softly and bashfully,

"If you please, Sir, I want to be a fairy."

At this the man burst out laughing, and said to her,

"You had better go and wash your face, my little maid."

So Pharronida went to the Public Baths and Washhouses, and paid threepence, and came back very clean to the stage-door, and said again, softly and bashfully,

"If you please, Sir, I have washed my face, and I should like to be a fairy."

At this the man laughed again; but he opened his eyes very wide, and said,

"Haden't you better see the manager?"

So Pharronida saw the manager, and said to him, more softly and bashfully than ever, because he wore a gold chain, and looked as grand and dreadful as if he could make her into a fairy, whether she would or no,

"If you please, Sir, I should like to be a fairy."

Then the manager stretched out his legs very wide, like King Henry VIII. in the pictures, and put both his thumbs into his crimson velvet waistcoat, and glared at Little Pharronida, and said:—

"No vacancy this season!"

Then Pharronida thought what a pity it was she had not come a day or two earlier. But as she was getting into bed that night she had a thought, and the next morning she went very early to the stage-manager, and said,

"If you please, Sir, I have brought this stocking-full of money. It was seventy-three pounds, fourteen shillings, and sixpence halfpenny (all but one bad penny) when father died; and I have only spent the odd money, and, if it is enough for the trouble, considering you have no vacancy, I will pay it all to you if you will make me into a fairy with two wings and a wand."

Then the eyes of the manager began to twinkle; for he had a very costly transformation-scene to produce that Christmas, entitled, THE GLEAMING GLACIERS OF THE GLADES OF GLORY, AND SHIMMERING CHANDELIERS OF THE SHINGLED SHADES. So he made a snatch at the money, and turned it all out in a heap, and counted it up to the last sixpence, while Pharronida stood trembling lest there should be any more of it bad. But there was not, and the manager was satisfied, and said,

"Done! It's a bargain! I'll make a fairy of you, by Golly."

This made Little Pharronida tremble; for she did not know who Golly was, and fancied it was going to begin at once.

III.

Pharronida now became a fairy, and was dressed in a white muslin skirt, looped up short; she wore a garland of roses on her head, and a pink sash round her waist; her little shoes were as white as cream, and she carried a wand with a star at the top made of green tinsel. Yet her happiness did not equal her expectations, and she was in some danger of becoming a cynical elfin girl, in the very Glades of Glory. From this misfortune, however, she was saved by noticing

that the Gleaming Glaciers looked very nice as you were approaching them, very disagreeable when you stood upon them, and very nice again when you were passing away from them. Now, Pharronida was metaphysical, and said to herself, "That must be the way in life; and some day I shall know I did a happy thing when I became a fairy."

But her destiny was not yet fulfilled; for, though a fairy, she was not a fairy-queen, as her father's dying words said she was to be. So she waited and waited, month after month, and even year after year, until she was tall, and strong, and very beautiful, and could dance on the points of her toes, and say some words if they should happen to come in her part. "I am determined," said Pharronida, "to become a fairy-queen, because it is my cue" (she meant her destiny.) "Perhaps I shall have a new sensation then; but, whether I do or not, I shall be right—and a fairy-queen I intend to be!"

IV.

This perseverance, and these proper sentiments at last met their due reward; and the night came on which Pharronida was to be a beautiful fairy queen. She was all in pure white and gold, like a lily; she had a crown of golden stars on her head, with a large one in front; her girdle was gold, her sandals were gold, her wand was gold, and all the rest was as white as her own forehead. She was a real fairy-queen now, and went up to heaven in a chariot, with all sorts of music, as soon as ever she had spoken the words in her part.

But, it must be confessed, Pharronida was again disappointed. The new sensation did not come, although she kept looking for it up to the very last moment and the very last bit of cloud in the skies. This puzzled Pharronida very much, and she said to herself, "It was my destiny to be a fairy-queen, and yet there is nothing in it!"

Poor Pharronida! she did not know how many great warriors, and kings, and poets have said the like—no understanding destiny—and she was now in danger of becoming a cynical fairy queen, even when she could revel in the very Bowers of Bliss and go up to heaven with a variety of music.

SECOND PART.

I.

On the very night when Pharronida became a fairy-queen, and went up to heaven in a chariot, saying words as she rose from the ground, a humble sailor-lad, of the name of Philip, went to the play by himself and beheld her. His ship, which was an East Indiaman as tall as a house, was going to clear out of the docks the next morning, and he had determined to take a night's pleasure before he left his native country on a long voyage. He was a very hearty, kind lad, and had a jack-knife hung at his side, exactly as if he had come straight out of Chancer; it made you shiver your timbers and reef tops to look at him, and you could not help singing "Ninny-oh! ninny-oh!" or some other sailor's song, in a minor key, as you watched this ruddy lad steering down a street. On this very night he sat in the front row of the pit and leaned his chin on the rail of the orchestra, so close that he inconvenienced the drum and the cymbals, who several times were near hitting him, though, of course, unintentionally; for no one could bear him malice that looked at his open, bold countenance. But such was the attention Philip paid to the performance that he was insensible to anything but the Bowers of Bliss and the beautiful Fairy-Queen, who rose up to the skies all white and gold, like a lifted lily, going to the asphodel meadows of heaven because she was so good. And the words she spoke were these:—

Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Virtue—she alone is free!
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the spherie chime;
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her!

Now, it seemed to Philip that, as the fairy-queen spoke these words, she fixed her eyes straight upon him, and spoke to him. This was a mistake, of course, for fairy-queens never look at anybody in the pit; however, it made him blush all the same as if it had been real; and he drew a deep sigh from his very waist-belt upwards as the lovely fairy-queen disappeared behind the clouds. "That," said Philip to himself, "must be the Sweet Little Cherub that sits up Aloft," for Philip was not aware that a cherub can never be a female, and is entirely composed of head and wings, instead of having a beautiful body like this fairy-queen.

Being economical (because he had an aged mother to support), Philip had not bought a bill of the play when he took his seat in the pit, although he had been much pressed to do so by the woman who brought round the refreshments. But, as she now came up his row of the benches, saying, "Ginger-beer! lemonade! any ale or porter?" Philip purchased a bill, in order that he might discover the name of the beautiful fairy-queen. This he soon saw was no other than Pharronida, which was not an easy word for him to spell, though extremely proper, as such, for a fairy-queen. However, Philip put the bill into his bosom, next his heart, right underneath his blue jersey; and he said, in a whisper, "I will never part with this. The fairy-queen is my destiny; and I shall forget her name if I do not look often at the bill."

The next morning Philip's ship was towed out of dock, and Philip left his native land for a long time. This vessel was called The Siren, and had a figure-head which, to him, had hitherto seemed the most beautiful object in creation, supposing it had been alive; but, after having seen Pharronida, he no longer considered it in the same light. As Philip was a true sailor, it distressed him to have to think less of the figure-head of his ship; but such was his destiny.

II.

It was longer than even he expected before Philip could return to England; but all the while he was away he kept on thinking of his fairy-queen and the beautiful words, though Pharronida, perhaps, had never seen him or thought of him at all, and continued asking what was the use of being a fairy-queen, and sometimes almost doubting her destiny. All this while Philip was out in the Indian Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean, and the Gulf of Borneo, and the Strait of Borneo, and many other strange seas that you will find on the map, thinking of the beautiful fairy-queen Pharronida and her beautiful words as she went up to heaven. This made him the most splendid sailor on boardship, and kept him as good as he was clever. Philip saw the constellation of the Southern Cross, and the Great Wall of China, and the Coral Islands, and the Malays that run mucks, and the flamingos, and the kangaroos, and once he saw an *ornithorynchus paradoxus*, and another time a real *ntshiego mnbouwe*. This remarkable occurrence took place off the coast of Africa, but nothing put Pharronida out of the head of this faithful Philip. When it blew great guns, he thought of his fairy-queen; when the pilot could not see his way for fog, he thought of his fairy-queen; when it struck six bells, he thought of his fairy-queen; when the water came pouring in amidships, and the cry was "All hands to the pumps!" he thought of his fairy-queen; and when, in the port of Ningpo, a wicked shipmate wanted to drag him to a wicked place, Philip shouted "Pharronida!" and, pressing his hand on his breast, where the playbill was, ran away from temptation, like a true sailor pursued by a land shark. Of course, after this, he was very much teased by his comrades, especially by the wicked man, who was always asking him how to spell Pharronida, and taunting him with not having a lock of her hair let into his bacco-box. Philip said nothing about the playbill, of course; if he had, they would have torn it from under his jersey.

One day the wicked man fell over the bulwarks, or out of a port-hole, I forget which; and there was a large shark passing just at the very moment. But Philip happened to be looking over the side of the ship, and saw the accident, and the horrible mouth of the shark stretched very wide open to crunch up the wicked sailor-man. Then Philip thought in his heart, "There's a Sweet Little

Cherub that sits up Aloft!" and, drawing his cutlass and shouting "Pharronida!" in a voice of thunder, leaped down into the Ocean and chopped the shark's flesh right through to the backbone, so that he turned away to die, making the waves red for ever so far with his nasty blood.

After that the sailors never laughed at Philip about his Pharronida; but such, I regret to state, is the superstition of the nautical mind, that they supposed it to be a charm, and repeated it on the most unnecessary occasions when there was anything rather difficult to be done. So that there was nothing heard on board The Siren at six bells, and three bells, and eight bells, and any other time, but "Pharronida."

Of all this Pharronida was not, as you may suppose, aware; nor did she dream that it was part of her destiny.

III.

Early on the very day after The Siren came into port, Philip, going along a street on the banks of the river, met a wedding procession, and walked more slowly, in order that he might enjoy such a beautiful sight. Now, it was a very crowded street, and from the walls of the warehouses were swinging all manner of cranes, and hoists, and pulleys; and, just as the wedding procession drew nigh where Philip was, a very heavy bale, bound with iron hoops, came swooping down towards the head of the poor bridegroom. Of course, the people screamed; but it was too late, and the poor bridegroom was killed on the spot. As he gave his last dying groan the bride sunk fainting backwards, and would have fallen upon the pavement, and probably hurt herself very much, if it had not been for Philip, who sprang forward with great activity, and, murmuring "Pharronida!" to himself, caught her in his arms. This gallant action on the part of Philip attracted the attention of the friends of the bride, and an acquaintance grew up between them from that very morning.

Now, the widowed bride was extremely beautiful, and Philip could not help thinking her almost, if not quite, as lovely as his fairy-queen Pharronida; indeed, the more he saw of her fascinating ways and her kindness of disposition, the fonder he grew of her; so that at last he became perplexed in his mind. It is true, Pharronida had made him think the figure-head of The Siren less beautiful, but this lady (he always called her "Madam," and she called him "Sir"), without seeming more beautiful, made him feel as happy as Pharronida had done; and yet she was not a fairy-queen, but was living on a small property left to her by a relation, who had died shortly before the day on which she had become a maiden-widow. Often and often, looking at his playbill, Philip resolved to tear himself away for ever; and still he could not do it. And he never could learn anything of Pharronida; probably, because he was ignorant of the world in which fairies are made and put into bowers of bliss and gleaming glades of glory.

One day, as Philip happened to be sitting alone with the lady, who treated him like a brother, with the entire approbation of her relatives, it came powerfully into his mind that he must make a proposal of marriage to her. This idea struck him at the very moment when he was in the act of raising a glass of sherry-wine, with nuts in it, to his lips, and so he caused some astonishment when he set the glass down, saying, convulsively,

"I cannot! I will not!"

Of course, the lady considered that he had had enough wine before coming there, and did not like to press him to drink, as he seemed resolved to be temperate; but still, she said politely,

"Why not, Sir?"

"Madam," said Philip, "the truth is, I love another."

"And this to me, Sir!" says the lady, just as it is set down in the playbooks; "after you have sent me such sweet verses!" This was true, and Philip had been very unhappy after copying them out for her.

"Madam," said he, "I am a guilty wretch! Scorn me, if you will! I have been carrying on rather matrimonially, I know—I know it, I regret it; I was even now on the very verge of proposing for your hand; but I will never wed any woman but my Pharronida!"

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed the lady, "that is my name! I am Pharronida!"

"It is impossible," answered Philip; "there cannot be two Pharronidas in the whole wide world! There is but one, and here she is!" And, saying that, he drew the playbill from under his jersey, and, shedding a tear, handed it to the lady, saying,

"Do not tear it, Madam, in your just displeasure; but that is my Pharronida—the fairy-queen in the bowers of bliss—the fairy-queen ascending to heaven, with a variety of music—she was dressed in white and gold, and not like you, though nothing can be in better taste than your attire. Oh, Pharronida! my Pharronida! when shall I see you once again?"

As Philip uttered these words he buried his face in his hands, and so he did not notice that the lady had left the apartment. But, the truth is, she went up stairs to her own room, and, going to her boxes, took out the proper dress of a fairy-queen in a bower of bliss, which she had preserved as a relic, in the humble hope that she might one day have a sensation which would explain her destiny to her. This attire she put on, with white satin slippers, and delicate pink hose, and a crown on her head—and so she came down stairs and stood before Philip, all on one leg, and waving the toasting-fork for a wand.

This excited Philip very much, as you may suppose, and he was scarcely able to pronounce a syllable. Yet he managed to say,

"One thing more—speak the words, and I shall know my Pharronida!"

Then the fairy queen spoke the words:—

Mortals that would follow me,
Love Virtue—she alone is free!
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the spherie chime,
Or, if Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her!

"You are, you are my Pharronida!" cried Philip, extremely delighted. "One thing more—now go up to heaven! No, no, don't—but you ought to do, for that is your proper place—but, oh! my Pharronida, I want you; so let me keep you here!"

The consequence of this was that Pharronida had to run away and change her fairy's dress for the one she had just put off. But Philip was so vexed at this that he ran out after her and stood at the foot of the stairs, while she hastened up to her own room.

IV.

Pharronida, the fairy-queen, now understood her destiny; and said to Philip,

"Philip, there is only one thing I wish to mention first; my father was a crossing-sweeper."

"My sweet Pharronida," answered Philip, "I am so glad you mentioned it, for mine was a chimney-sweeper; and a better sweep never raked down a flue!"

"I admire your spirit," said Pharronida; "the crossing sweep by my father was the cleanest and neatest in London, and he left me seventy-three pounds, fourteen shillings, and sixpence halfpenny in an old stocking."

"And what, my Pharronida, did you do with the money?" Let it be understood that Philip asked this question, not because he was mercenary, but merely from a motive of natural curiosity.

"I paid it away to be made a fairy!" said Pharronida.

"Pharronida!" said Philip, with emotion, "it was a cheap bargain!"

Then he told her everything, and she understood her destiny more and more every minute.

"From the very first moment I set eyes on you in Thames-street, dear, I felt something!" Philip remarked.

"Yes, dear," said Pharronida; "it was a Mysterious Attraction."

This explanation being considered satisfactory, they went to see a pantomime that very night, and Philip applauded the fairy-queen of the blissful bowers when she waved her wand and spoke her "words," but he shook his head at Pharronida, and whispered,

"Ah! if you could have seen yourself, my love, when you went up to heaven!"

"But, Philip, we never can see ourselves; and that is the reason we do not understand our destinies."

Happy, happy Pharronida, to have seen so much; for kings and prophets have desired to see it, and have died without the sight!

Thus they got married; and there was a little girl; and if she is not a fairy there never was one; but you would think she was if you could see her listening to Philip when he tells her about the flamingos, and the *ntshiego-mnbouwe*, and the *ornithorynchus paradoxus*.

W. B. R.

ROASTING CHESTNUTS.

It is a great pity that anybody ever invented that stupid story about the monkey who made use of the cat's paw to take the roasted chestnuts from the grate. Of course, nobody with a grain of sense believes a word of it, although everybody knows what is meant by being made a cat's paw, and most of us use that expression at some time in our lives. Whether we do or not, however, the original inventor of the story ought, if he be alive now (and if he be not dead, it's high time he thought about dying), to be ashamed of himself, for spoiling one of the most delightful Christmas amusements of our childhood.

Look at the wonderful variety of emotions of human interests, and even of virtues, which are fostered by the roasting of chestnuts, and then ask yourself, whether the man who could deteriorate them by the intervention of an apocryphal story is not deserving of unmitigated reproach. There is—first, the purchase of the fruit, which may be effected either by measure or by weight; and what could be a finer exercise of prudence than to endeavour to discover in which of these two ways you will get most for your money. Then there is the domestic lesson involved in the skilful preparation of the fire; the neat manipulation (requiring calm self-reliance) of the penknife to make an incision in the skin; the decision of character and unshrinking firmness necessary for the proper placing of the nuts without incurring the penalty of contact with red-hot metal; then follows the calm superiority to difficulties evinced by successfully removing the incandescent nuts from the glowing embers and carefully depositing them on a plate without afterwards imprinting a series of black streaks on your own countenance by a too sudden application of your fingers to your mouth; and the crowning lesson of all is that inculcated by the uncertainty of the process of cooking, and the patient investigation requisite to determine between partial rawness and too large a proportion of vegetable charcoal.

In childhood all these varying emotions are associated with this moral and intellectual amusement; but, alas! how differently do we regard it when we have reached those years which are so often supposed to bring discretion! The truth is that we have heard the story of the "Cat's Paw," and chestnut-roasting was vulgarised and lost its inner meaning from that hour. The contorted feline visage and the long, lean, apish hand have raised an association never to be dispelled. All that we can do is (in an apish manner) to simulate the early pleasures of our youth, and to refrain from injuring the tender susceptibilities of our children by forbidding them to burn their fingers, when so many noble lessons are involved in the process.

The only amusement left, in which children of a larger growth may join the younger branches at Christmas-tide, is forfeits in all the varieties of "Ladies' toilette," "How, when, and where," "Proverbs," "History," and "Old Soldier;" and surely not the most serious amongst us could occupy a more amiable and pleasing position than in undergoing the delightful penalties, pronounced by some fair judge who is appointed to award them.

A good game of forfeits with an able appraiser is one of the chief of Christmas accessories; and the pleasures of such a scene affords a worthy subject for the artist who is imbued with the genial Christmas spirit.

THE LONDON GAZETTE.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16.

BANKRUPTCY.—J. BROWN, Lower-road, Deptford.—T. GRAVES, Seymour-street, Euston square, plumber.—T. B. C. MEAD, R. Wimbledon, licensed victualler.—G. BETTS, Shoreditch chemist.—J. WILSON, Epsom-street, Holloway road, grocer.—W. DAY, Lambeth, walk, grocer.—J. B. LIPMAN, Old Fish-street, and Albert-street, Mortimer-road, foreign commission agent.—J. A. DEBY, Forest-road, Dalston, commission agent.—H. S. KIRKBY, Clarendon-terrace, Milney-park, Islington, bookseller.—E. S. DAVIS, Shoreditch, West-street, Hackney, coal merchant.—B. SODGEY, Warwick, farmer.—H. R. COLEMAN, Finchley-road, and Royal-park, Greenway, storekeeper.—W. DYE, Watlington-park, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—A. PARKER, Commercial Road, journeyman, wheelwright.—N. SANDER, Lavender-road, Battersea, builder.—J. W. TRIMEN, Bayham-street, Camden Town, photographer.—H. GOOD, Ipswich, corn merchant.—J. W. MCDONALD, Southsea, milliner.—W. A. GIBBS, Norwich, ropemaker.—T. STEARNS, jun., Cambridge, dealer in fancy goods.—W. SMITH, Coventry, paper-dealer.—G. A. FERRIS, Brighton, naval officer.—W. H. VERNY, Burton-on-Trent, journeyman, G. G. PETHICK, Cotton-wood, Warwickshire, painter.—H. SMITH, Leam-er, painter.—G. WALDRAM, Leicester, wheelwright.—J. ROWLEY, Huddersfield, yarn spinner.—J. HEDDERSTON, Scarborough, miller.—J. AYSCUGH, West, Tansfield, Yorkshire farmer.—M. WALMSLEY, Bireh's Inn, Rochdale, innkeeper.—J. BUSHBY, York-shire, carrier.—J. LEE, Leigh, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead, Essex, builder.—H. T. EDLIN, Salford, Lancashire, railway station-master.—J. JACKSON, Barnsley, journeyman, hatter.—B. BRIDLEY, Crayke, E. BROMSGER, jun., Barton-under-Needwold, Stafford-shire, paper-hanger.—T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, T. PERKINS, painter.—T. OLVANT, Hand and Hold Blue-house, near Pelton Hill, Durham, labourer.—J. and D. BOUTSTEIN, West Hartlepool, hawker of jewellery.—W. WOOLLESTON, Birmingham, journeyman silversmith.—G. SMART, Charlton Heathstone, Somerset-shire, gamekeeper.—G. JAMES, Greenrover Cottage, near Gildard, and Seawick, Cumberland, husbandman.—S. QUIN, Salford, Lancashire, contractor.—W. H. B. CHOLL, Manchester, trad manufacturer.—J. OLIVER, Hecley, near Sheffield, razor manufacturer.—J. WRIGHT, Rusbou, Donbshire, shoemaker.—G. THIEL, Bradford, Yorkshire, greengrocer.—J. FLECHER, Bradford, Yorkshire, carrier.—E. and J. WESTWOOD, Halesowen, Worcester-shire, master printers.—G. ROCKLIFE, Bickley-lane, near Huddersfield, butcher.—J. H. W. LINTHWAITE, Yorkshire, joiner.—J. JONES, Tyn-y-wydd, Skimrod, 84, Park-street, Deptford.—D. WEDGER, Cam-sursey, G. THOMAS, Pontnewydd, near Newport, Monmouth-shire, labourer.—W. TATE, Leeds, over-looker in a silk manufactory.—G. SAUNDERS, Elmstead



AUSTRALIA AND THE OLD COUNTRY: THE WRITING, THE DESPATCH, AND THE RECEIPT, OF A CHRISTMAS LETTER.—(DRAWN BY H. S. MELVILLE)—SEE PAGE 403.

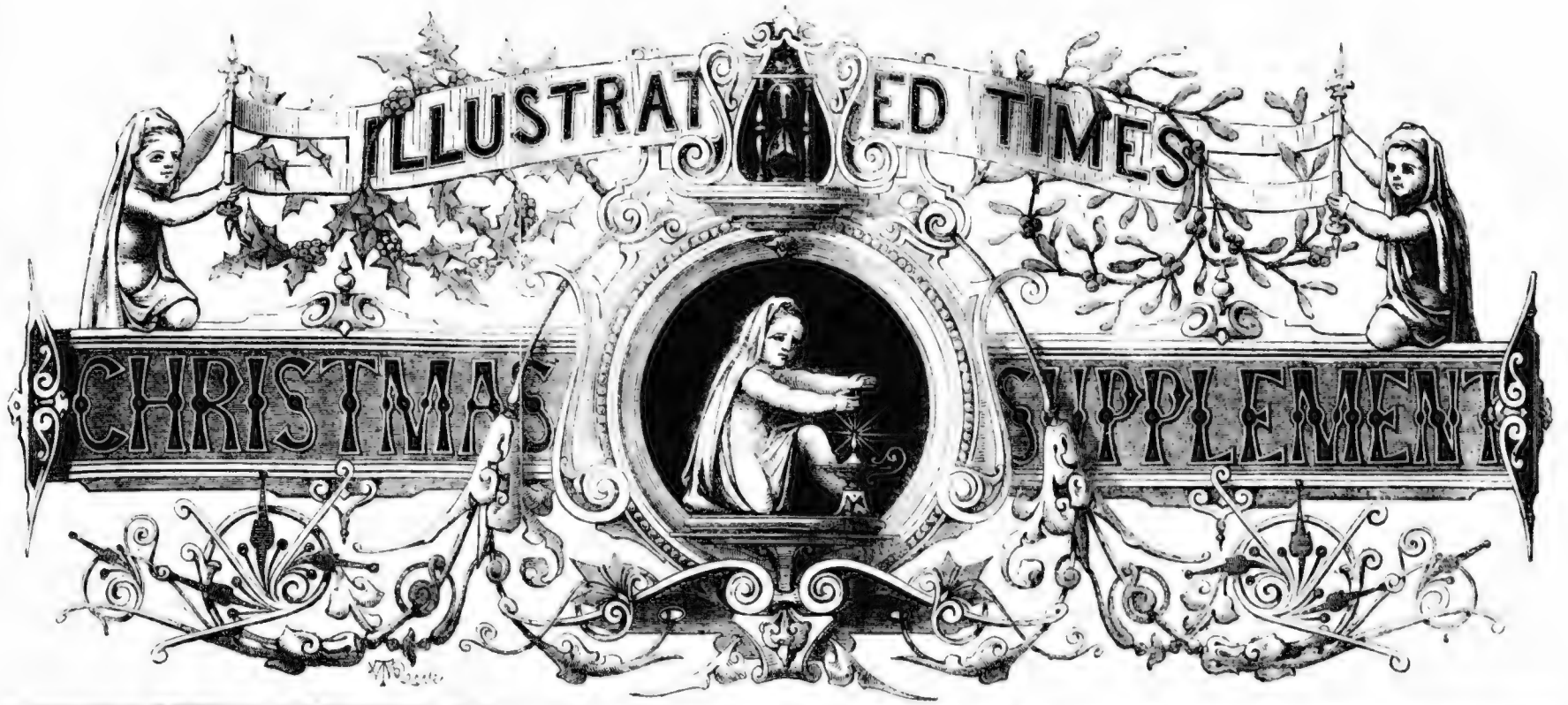


A CHRISTMAS PARTY: FORFEITS.—(DRAWN BY LIEUT SECCOMBE).—SEE PAGE 411.



THE ROASTED CHESTNUTS.—(DRAWN BY ANDERSON).—SEE PAGE 411.

patient action Kn and Andie Joins, enables the patient to walk, sit, or ride with ease and comfort, whenever amputated. It is much lighter and less expensive than the old style of cork leg, will last a lifetime, and was awarded the highest medals in the London and Paris Exhibitions. Can be obtained only at Grossmith's Artificial Leg, Eye, Nose, and Hand Manufactory, 175, Fleet-street. Established 1760.



LONDON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1864.



LINGERING BEHIND.—(DRAWN BY ALFRED BLADEL.)

A LITTLE CONVERSATION

BETWEEN

ALFRED, EMILY, AND TIMELY REFLECTION.

Scene—The Country. A walking party, who are bound to a house in the distance. Alfred and Emily lingering behind.

Alfred. Do you mind letting these people go on first for a moment? I wish to speak to you on a subject which I—er—hope is—that is, I trust may be—not altogether hateful. By-the-by, even one's friends are really a bore sometimes—eh—er—don't you think so?

Emily. Well, sometimes.

(Timely Reflection, interrupting.) Mind what you're about, or you'll show how much you care for him.

Emily to Alfred. Yes; perhaps so; but I can't see how that can be the case just now.

Alfred. Oh! ah! No, of course not; but you see (pauses)—I say, Emily, may I call you dear Emily?

(Timely Reflection, interrupting.) Don't make a fool of yourself.

Alfred to Emily. You received the letter that I wrote you yesterday?

Emily. Of course I did; you gave it me yourself, you know.

Alfred. And may I hope that—er—one day its bright—er—inspirations may be—er—realised, dearest Emily?

Timely Reflection to Emily. He's quite in earnest, but don't give him a direct answer.

Emily. Well (poking the grass with the point of her parasol), you see, I have scarcely—really—prayed—don't ask me—let us go on; whatever will these people say?

(Timely Reflection, capital.)

Alfred. One word. May I hope?

(Timely Reflection.) You're only four hundred a year, you know. How much will the old gentleman settle on her, do you think?

Alfred (to T. R.). Mercenary views be hanged! I mean seriously to go in for my profession when I'm engaged. (To Emily.) Dearest Emily, but one little word!

(Timely Reflection to Emily.) Be careful now; you know your position is only two hundred and fifty pounds, and you can't live on air.

Emily (to T. R.). Oh, bother! I'm sure I eat very little, and we shan't want to be fashionable people. Beside, there's a book that tells you how to keep a house on two hundred a year, and I'll ask Alfred to buy it for me. (To Alfred.) Dear Alfred, you—you'll think me ve-very foolish; but I do like you, I do indeed. (Cries.)

Alfred. By Jove! Dear girl, my every wish shall be to make you er—to make you happy. Let me kneel and—(makes ready to kneel down, when Timely Reflection, interrupting—You'd better not. You'll get up with squashed green spots on your trousers, and you know you're only one pocket-handkerchief.)

Alfred (rising). Well, my heart can worship you—ah!—if not my—that is—well—my legs.

Emily. Hadn't we better walk faster? What will those people think? What a bother they are!

Timely Reflection (to Alfred). "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may; Old Time is still a flying."

Alfred (to T. R.). More fool he to be in such a hurry. Let him fly; he needn't stay on our account.

(Timely Reflection.) You'll have plenty of him on your hands by-and-by.

Emily. Oh, pray do come along! They'll be there before us.

Alfred. I could linger behind for ever, or wait till we could—er—pick—that is, you know, pluck—gather next summer's roses together. By Jove! that sounded like a pun. (Timely Reflection.) That's all very well, you know. But you're deuced hungry, after all; and perhaps a glass of dry sherry—

Emily. Now, don't be naughty. Come along, there's a dear. (Timely Reflection.) I wonder what there'll be for dinner.

Alfred. Very well, then. Let's have a run. (Timely Reflection.) Pity you didn't bring a biscuit.)

Exeunt omnes.

THE KEDGES OF YARESELEY AND THEIR FRIEND THE DOLPHIN.

STANDING as it did at the fishiest end of a Hampshire fishing village, there was nothing very remarkable in the fact that the little roadside "public" should be styled "The Dolphin." That a picture of that proverbially rollicking and jovial ocean natives should adorn the swinging sign above the doorway; that it should appear on the door-posts, together with the intimation that Samuel Kedge was licensed to vend neat wines to be drunk on the premises; that the same fishy symbol should show upon the pots and upon the glasses, and even (as might plainly be seen, standing on the short ladder, he reached upward to attach the holly-bunch to the top of the sign-post) upon the fleshy part of the brown and hairy arm of Samuel Kedge himself, was in no way astonishing. You had only to suppose him a retired fisherman, and the prevalence of dolphins was at once accounted for.

I have spoken of the dolphins upon the pots and glasses ranged round and about the bar. I had ample opportunity for observing them; for, doubtless, assuming that her husband was at hand to wait on customers, Mrs. Kedge had betaken herself rearward, and I was kept tap-tapping with my shilling on the counter for no inconsiderable time. Standing on his ladder, Mr. Kedge had a fair view of me through the open fanlight over the door; and it was evident, from the increasing discontent of his countenance and the spiteful tugs and snaps he made at the string he was tying, that my tapping was fidgeting him beyond endurance, and that, balanced between his inclination to come down and serve me and a desire to finish a job he was half through with, he was not in an amiable frame of mind.

"Can't e make nobody 'ear, mister?" asked he presently, putting his face in at the hole.

"I'll take a pint of ale, when you are at leisure," said I.

"Blame the people. Hoy! Don't e 'ear? Am I to get off this blamed ladder because you can't—? Oh! here you are, missus. Draw a pint of ale, will ye, please?"

Wiping her floury hands on her apron, and at the same time apologising for having kept me waiting, Mrs. Kedge proceeded to do as her husband requested. The best ale was the topmost barrel, and, as she raised the jug and turned the tap, her gown-sleeve fell back, and, behold! there was the tattooed image of the dolphin, a facsimile of that which appeared on the arm of her husband.

Although this was not very remarkable, it was sufficiently so to set a man who had nothing better to occupy his mind speculating as to how it came about. There could be only one solution to the riddle. The time when Mr. and Mrs. Kedge were young was the time of the French War, and a hot time for sailors—for men-of-war's men, at least. To this latter class Samuel Kedge had doubtless belonged. Samuel had a sweetheart, the present grey-haired, puckery-faced Mrs. Kedge, but at that time plump and tender-hearted Susan something, fearful at Samuel's departure for the wars and hungering for love-tokens. She possessed his portrait, a considerable portion of his hair, and half a guinea-gold wedding-ring (Samuel reserving the other half till the war was at end and the joyous time of splicing arrived); still, her mind was not at ease. Locks of hair might fade, or, worse, be changed, if you sent it to be set in a brooch; portraits might be broken; portions of guinea-gold wedding-rings be lost or stolen. Could he not give her some token of his love, enduring, imperishable? 'Twas then that the dolphin idea entered Samuel's distracted brain. Going to her mother's workbox (for they were sitting in the little parlour at the time) he withdrew therefrom a large darning-needle and from his own pocket a small quantity of gunpowder. Clasp her hand, he looked fondly into her trusting eyes, saying, "Have you the courage, my sweet?" "Ay," replied the noble girl, while the light of womanly devotion lit up her eyes with great brilliancy. "Put my courage to

the test, dearest Samuel; bid that needle which you now produce drink my heart's blood; bid me swallow that gunpowder, that it may explode within me, and cast death and destruction to those around me; bid me"—"Nay," interrupted Samuel, kissing away her briny tears till his lips were saturated; "and canst thou deem thy Samuel so unkind? Listen, girl! Although I would not for my right hand hurt a single hair of your head, still the operation I would suggest is rather a painful one. It is the tattooing of the sportive dolphin, whose gambols cheer the weary mariner through his midnight watch upon our left arms. Here is the implement, Susan, dearest. Let our bloods mingle; let us give dot for dot; let us!"

Thus far had I proceeded with the romance of the "Dolphin" when a little incident occurred which took all the wind out of my sails and sent me in a twinkling stranded on to the shore of bare fact. There came in from the kitchen, bearing between them a pair of water, a boy and a girl, the former aged about fourteen, and the latter about two years younger, as I should suppose. Their arms were bare to the elbows; and, lo and behold! on their left arms, on the self-same spot, and of the self-same size, shape, and colour, there appeared the dolphin. Could it be a "birth" mark? Could "the romance of the Dolphin" be carried thus far: "and so devoted were this fond couple, that on the birth of their first child there appeared on his arm, at exactly the same spot where years before—"

"If you splash that water, youngste, you'll have your grandfather about you; he aint in the best of tempers, so I warn you."

Thus spoke Mrs. Kedge to the pair-carriers, furnishing conclusive evidence that the youthful bearers of the dolphin brand were not their children, but their grandchildren. It was altogether incomprehensible, and there was nothing left for it but to make direct inquiry.

"What have you been painting on your arm, my lad?" I asked, pointing at the figure with my umbrella.

"Nawthen," replied the boy; "beant paint, nayther."

"It may not be paint," said I; "but it's more than nothing; it's meant for the picture of a dolphin, or I'm much mistaken."

"Oh, dolphin! yeas; 'tis dolphin," replied the intelligent youth, turning away, as though the subject were not in the least worthy of discussion. The girl went away with him. Turning to the old woman, I observed,

"The little girl has the same figure on her arm, has she not, Ma'am?"

"All the Kedges have it," replied she; "at least, the Kedges of Yaresley."

"A family symbol, Ma'am?"

"Well, yes; something like that I s'pose you would call it," vaguely responded the uncommunicative old woman, going busily about her brushing and dusting, as though she had no inclination to pursue the subject.

"You, too, I perceive, Ma'am, bear the symbol." I cannot bear to be baffled over a mystery.

"And a good many more besides me," replied Mrs. Kedge. "If you had happened to have called here to-morrow instead of to-day you would have seen, how many of us shall I say?—twenty-seven, twenty-eight if poor old uncle Sibley can get over from Yarmouth. The Kedges of Yaresley always dine together on Christmas Day, you must know, Sir."

I should have liked to ask all about these strange "Kedges of Yaresley," and why they wore the sign of the dolphin on their arms; but just at this moment, Mr. Samuel Kedge, having finished his job of holly hanging, came in, and, putting away his ladder, took the place of his wife behind the bar, while she returned to the kitchen. I called for a little more ale.

"Pretty jolly in these parts on Christmas Day, landlady?"

"Well, this part is like all parts, Sir; there's fat and lean of it. We're pretty jolly, but that says nothing for the part as a part, because it's all amongst ourselves."

"A sort of family party, eh? Your good lady was saying something about it when you came in. We were speaking about that singular mark by which"—

"Oh, indeed!" interrupted Mr. Kedge, stamping his feet with so much noise that, if I had said anything further, he could not have heard it, "it's plaguety cold; I think we shall have a sharp frost to-night."

"My attention was directed to the dolphin on the boy's arm by the very excellent manner in which it is executed. You must have a clever tattooer hereabout."

As I began to speak he took up a bottle with some shot in it, and, under pretence of cleaning it, made such a clatter by rattling and shaking it, that it was hard to say whether he had really not heard what I said or only pretended that such was the case.

It was hard to give up without one more struggle. "As you say, landlady," said I, "it is plaguety cold; what will you take by way of a warmer?"

He was still rattling the shot in the bottle, but he heard plainly enough this time.

"Well, thankye, if I take anything, it will be just three pen'orth of rum neat," was his prompt reply.

So he had his rum, and we began talking about Christmas. Christmas at Yaresley, in London, at sea, and abroad in Australia, where Mr. Kedge had a son. When he had filled his glass he left the rum bottle on the counter beside the glass, and while he, for a few moments, turned his back to search a drawer for a letter from his Australian son, in which was described how blazing hot it was in those regions at Christmas time, I filled his glass a second time. His resentment of the liberty was but slight, he merely wagged his head pleasantly, and said that it wouldn't do, and then tossed it off with a relish.

We had a little more pleasant discourse, and then in came the baker, with his board on his head, carrying a steaming loin of baked pork, that smelt delicious, coming out of the frosty air.

"Bless my heart, I had no idea it was dinner-time," said Mr. Kedge; "how the time flies when you get regular on at talking, don't it?"

The baker said it was plaguety cold, too, and took a little gin: completely put Mr. Kedge out of the dolphin groove into which I was surely leading him, by starting some nonsensical talk about the grocer's dog biting his little boy. He appealed to me, but I felt so spiteful towards him that I gave him my opinion that if boys would persist in teasing dogs they must expect to be bitten; which, at all events, had the good effect of sending him away; as for his slamming the door after him, I cared no more for that than for his insolent sneer about "birds of a feather."

"Your dinner smells so nice that it has given me quite an appetite," said I to Mr. Kedge, "I think I'll trouble you for a crust of bread and cheese."

Not a hard man at worst of times, the rum had yet further softened him, and, without answering me, he vanished into the parlour into which the pork had been carried, and whence issued a most inviting clicking of plates and knives and forks. After an absence of full a minute he returned.

"Would you like a bit of hot dinner, Sir? We'll make room for you at our table, if it's agreeable," spoke Mr. Kedge, cheerily.

It was particularly agreeable. The fact is, I had no particular business at Yaresley at all. I had hurried there in hopes to catch the boat that carried passengers to where I was bound to spend Christmas Day, but had missed it, and there remained nothing but to stay until the next morning. There are many worse places to pass a winter afternoon than the private parlour of an inn, especially if the landlord is a comfortable man, as I began to think Mr. Kedge was. Besides, there was the dolphin mystery. It was not impossible that he might after dinner be brought by careful management to gratify my curiosity. Under these circumstances, I thanked Mr. Kedge for his hospitable offer, and accepted it.

There was nothing particular about the apartment, except that it was very much larger than might have been expected. Its furniture was of the old-fashioned cosy and comfortable sort; and in the middle, just opposite the jolly fireplace, was a bookcase, decently stocked; and in front of this something carefully shrouded in brown calico, and which, from its shape, I concluded was a harp.

The company at the dinner-table comprised Mr. and Mrs. Kedge, the boy and the girl who had carried the pail, and a young woman who, although she called the landlady "aunt," was clearly not a Kedge—a Kedge of Yaresley, that is—for the sleeves of her cotton gown were turned back to her elbows, exposing her plump arms, but no sign of the dolphin was visible on either of them. (You must be the person that plays on the harp) was my natural inference; and, as room was made for me between her and the landlady, wishing to make myself agreeable, I presently managed to turn the conversation a musical turn. Here, however, I failed disastrously, as was a young person of indifferent conversational powers, and, polite inquiry as to the musical instrument for which she had preference, she replied "the waits," and there left it.

Who, then, did play upon the harp? Nobody. There was no harp for them to play on.

After the cloth was removed Mr. Kedge proposed that we should have a pipe, and in a little time we were left the sole occupants of the parlour. Presently, however, Keziah (the niece) returned, bearing in her hand a wonderfully pretty wreath composed of holly sprigs, and mistletoe, and snowdrops. When I say a wreath, it was shaped like one, though, in point of size, it was large enough to encircle any two human heads.

"Will this do, uncle?" asked Keziah.

"Well, it's amazing pretty," replied Mr. Kedge, admiringly; "but it seems to me barely big enough; it barely covered his snout last year, if you recollect, Kez."

"I hope it is large enough, uncle," pouted Keziah; "if you had let me take his measure before you began to paint him, there couldn't have been any mistake."

"I don't say that there is any mistake as it is, my dear; try it on, and we shall see."

Keziah gave her uncle a look of surprise, and glanced at me.

"Never mind," replied Mr. Kedge; "this is a gentleman from London. He will be a hundred miles away before he is many hours older."

Thus encouraged, Keziah approached the harp-shaped thing by the bookcase; and, though I tried very hard to retain a decent amount of self-possession, I the next moment experienced an astonishment compared with which all other astonishments within my recollection were mere passing surprises. Taking out sundry pins, Keziah unshrouded the supposed harp, and suddenly there was revealed to view a giant dolphin carved in wood and built—

—painted—a hideous monster, with its sharp snout and white teeth, and the inner part of its mouth coloured vivid scarlet. It was mounted on a sort of frame, to which were attached castors; and, having tenderly adjusted the garland on the image's head, Keziah wheeled it round, that her uncle might get a full and fair view of it.

"Come, that's something like," exclaimed Mr. Kedge, rising from his chair in admiration; "that fits him down to his gills in a proper manner; as it was last year, hiding only one of his eyes, and showing the corners of his mouth, it looked as though we were poking fun at him rather than doing him honour. It isn't a bad fit, is it, Sir, considering, you know, that he never was measured for it?"

"It is a very excellent fit, I should say," I replied, completely bewildered, and scarcely knowing what answer to make.

"Have you filled his snuffbox, Kez?" asked Mr. Kedge.

"No. Aunt says he had better not have his snuffbox filled until he is turned up properly. He split it about the room shamefully last year, if you remember, uncle," answered Keziah; and then she removed the garland, pinned up the dolphin, and tripped out of the room, leaving us to ourselves once more.

For several moments I was so lost in amazement that I sat puffing recklessly at my pipe and staring into the fire. What could it all mean? Had I stumbled on an hitherto-undiscovered community of leathens who worshipped the dolphin? It would seem so, and that to-morrow, Christmas Day, was the day of high festival with "the Kedges of Yaresley"—the day on which they decorated their idol with gaudy pigments and gave him a garland to wear. "If you had happened to call to-morrow you might have seen assembled twenty-seven Dolphinites, excluding Uncle Sibley," Mrs. Kedge had said. She did not say "Dolphinites," but what else could they be called? I half expected that Mr. Kedge would attempt to make a convert of me. Perhaps that was his object in inviting me into his parlour. I wondered what the ceremony of making a man a Dolphinite consisted in, and whether it was painful or simply ridiculous; whether, if it were one or the other, or both, it would be safe to resist the overtures of High Priest Kedge after the peep I had already been allowed into the mysterious religious rites of the singular sect. In the midst of my cogitation Mr. Kedge touched the bell, which responded with a tinkle that made me start in my chair. My apprehensions, however, were quickly allayed.

"I'm going to have a glass of grog," said Mr. Kedge; "what do you drink, Sir?"

I elected to have a little grog too, weak.

Keziah brought in the kettle, and the lemon, and the sugar, and the other things, and Mr. Kedge made his brew. He sipped it, and, finding it to his liking, gave a sigh of satisfaction, at the same time crossing his feet on the fender and placing his glass on a convenient bracket. I made a brew and sipped it too, but it was not the slightest use my affecting to be as much at my ease as Mr. Kedge was. There was the shrouded goblin almost at my elbow, and my inquiring eyes would stray towards it, do all I could to hinder. While so engaged for the twentieth time I was recalled by the sound of a small chuckle emitted by mine host.

"Can't make it out; can you?" asked he. "I dare say, now, it does seem to a stranger a queer sort of parlour ornament. I'll be bound that it does."

Rejoiced that he had so generously broached the business that was tormenting me, I promptly responded that, at least, as regarded myself, he was perfectly right; I assured him that in my opinion the presence of such a monstrosity in a private apartment was many degrees beyond queer, being nothing less than marvellous and astonishing.

"No doubt—no doubt; it is a matter of use, you see," replied Mr. Kedge. "We see nothing monstrous about it. How should we? It has been amongst us as long as I can remember."

"Indeed! and where might it have come from originally?" I asked, determined to take the mystery by open assault, since nothing else availed.

"Come from! fifty places, off and on, and at various times. From China, from Turkey, from the Indies. Last time of all it came from the Indies. You know what it is, of course," continued Mr. Kedge, doubtless observing my increasing perplexity. "It's the figure-head of a ship."

"Is that all? A common figure head of a ship?" I remarked, feeling not a little disappointed.

"No; not a 'common' figure-head," replied Mr. Kedge, emphatically, wagging his head as he set about his second brew, "but a most uncommon one."

"There's nothing uncommon about its appearance when it is regarded in the light you throw on it, at all events," I remarked, with purposeful obstinacy.

"There you are wrong again, as I will convince you in a twinkling; and, so saying, he briskly crossed the room, unpinned the monster's covering, so that he was bared from snout to tail; embraced him midway, and bending him downward till he creaked complainingly, altered his position from the perpendicular to the more natural horizontal, and wheeled him forward towards the fireplace, so that his ugly length occupied the space between the chairs. The tail end was towards Mr. Kedge, who presently applied his knuckles thereto with a smart rap, the result of which was a sharp click and the flying up of a circular lidlike piece in the tail, and the disclosure of a cavity that, from its colour, had evidently been used as a receptacle for snuff. "Now, what do you think of it for an uncommon figure-head?" asked my landlord, triumphantly.

"I shall decline to give an opinion until I am made acquainted with a few particulars of its history," I replied. "First of all, I should like to be informed whether the snuffbox belonged to our

friend while he did duty at the ship's bows, or whether I had been conferred on him as a luxury during his supercargoes."

"It belonged to him as a box, though not as a safe-box, when I did duty aboard ship," replied Mr. Kedge, once more seated comfortably on the fender. "On board ship it is a jewel-box; as a box in which lay hid what I may call the key of the prison in which an uncle of mine lay through eleven long years."

I expressed my sympathy for the poor man by a nod, and composed myself to an attitude of attention.

"Do you ever read the old newspapers—the very old ones?" inquired Mr. Kedge.

"Not when I can help it. I sometimes pick up last week's at a country inn where there is nothing fresher to be got."

"Last week's! Last century's, I mean. However, it's of no consequence. If you had seen the report of the case and read it there was nothing about it that would take hold on your memory. It simply said—I've got the paper, but it isn't handy—that Simon Kedge, supercargo in the service of the firm of Holroyd and Petching, merchants and shippers, was indicted for stealing a cross composed of gold and diamonds, intrusted to his charge and custody for delivery to a certain house at Bombay; and that the said Simon Kedge was found guilty and sentenced to transportation for the term of his natural life for the offence in question. That was all the newspapers said about it, and they were entitled to say it, for so it was, and the evidence given in the court seemed so clear that anybody but his own mother, who died two months after he was sent away, could not bring themselves to believe in his innocence, although he all through, before the trial and after it, so strongly insisted on it."

"And he was innocent, Sir. It was eleven years after his conviction that the real facts came to light; but they proved his innocence beyond the shadow of a doubt. My missus could tell you the story better than I can; for she's got what I haven't; that is, a good memory for hearsay, and knows how to put this and that together, as the saying is."

"However, as well as I can tell you, it was this way. Uncle Simon, you must know, was a real handsome young man. He wasn't bred to the sea, but was a sort of clerk at Holroyd and Petching's place, somewhere in Thames-street, London. Uncle Simon was quite a lad when he first went there, and then it was only John Holroyd, and Mr. Petching was the managing man. However, by-and-by, John Holroyd, who was a very old man, took Mr. Petching for a partner and seldom went to business at all. But it wasn't all in Mr. Petching's hands. Holroyd had a niece Margaret by name, who had lived with old Holroyd all her life and had been brought up by him rather as a business woman than a lady. She could cast accounts and prove a ledger with any clerk in the Bank of England, so I've been told. She often came to Thames-street, and would occupy herself with the books for hours together."

"If that isn't exactly how matters stood, it is pretty nearly. Well, this she-clerk, Margaret Holroyd, was not a beauty. She was not downright ugly, but she was a hard sort of party. As my missus says, there are lamb women and ram women, and she was the latter. Somehow, however, although I'm sure to everybody else about her, she was 'laub' to Uncle Simon. It was Simon who carried her books into her little counting-house, and Simon who stayed there to assist her. If a message was to be taken up to the house, Simon took it. In three years his salary increased from fifteen shillings a week to two guineas. It was the talk of the place, what a wonderfully lucky young chap he was."

"So he himself thought; he set it all down to luck. If anybody had whispered to him at that time, 'Luck, indeed! you young donkey! Don't you see anything else in the wind? Haven't you found out by this time that her regard for you is not founded in the least on your business qualifications? Don't you know she's in love with you?'—I'm sure, had anyone said as much to my uncle, even though it had been a no less authoritative person than Mr. Petching himself, he would have scouted the idea as too ridiculous to be entertained for a single moment. Besides, look at the difference in the position of the parties, to say nothing about the circumstances of Miss Margaret being close on thirty, while he was barely twenty-two. Besides, such a thing was put altogether out of the question by the fact that Uncle Simon already had a sweetheart, whom he had known since he and she were little boy and girl together; and when his last rise took place, when he was shifted a stool higher up towards the chief desk, the banns had been published, and they were engaged to be married."

"How the story goes on a little beyond that point, I'm not exactly clear. My missus could tell you to a word if she was here; but it isn't worth while to call her. Whether she, Miss Margaret that is, got a hint about the other young female that had been in the field so many years, or whether she grew fonder and fonder of Uncle Simon, till at last, in despair of his ever making the discovery, she up and confessed it to him; and he, like an honest and upright young fellow, up and confessed to her in return that he was already engaged, I can't say; anyhow she did learn about the old sweetheart. She lodged with an old woman, the wife of a ship-carpenter, employed by the firm, a wicked, mischief-making old witch, who, as soon as she discovered what Miss Holroyd was fishing after, gave her all the assistance in her power, and even invited her to her house one evening, while Polly was out with my uncle, and picked the lock of her box in her bed-room, where Polly kept all her letters, and gave them to Miss Holroyd to read. I can't say whether she found anything about herself in the letters; perhaps she did. If Polly had any suspicions of Miss Holroyd's designs against her young man she would, no doubt, write to him for an explanation; and no doubt he would, in answering her, avail himself of the most prominent features of the business, not forgetting Miss Holroyd's mature age and unfavourable appearance, to convince her how ridiculous the rumour was. This is only a guess, mind. Certain it is, however, that, from the moment of reading Polly's letters from Uncle Simon, she became his deadly enemy."

"But she didn't show herself as such. On the contrary, she affected to treat him with greater friendliness than ever. Just at this time the Dolphin was loading for a voyage to Bombay. Her cargo in bulk was of the ordinary sort, but she carried on besides some very costly jewellery to one of the chief business houses in the country; and one morning Mr. Petching called the young man into his counting-house to congratulate him on the fact that, in consideration of his faithful services, Mr. Holroyd had placed at his disposal the office of supercargo on board the Dolphin, the better to ensure the safe conveyance of the precious portion of the freight already mentioned."

"It had long been Uncle Simon's desire to go just one long voyage and back again, and here was a splendid opportunity. True, he was engaged to be married; but he was quite sure that Polly would have no very serious objection to postponing the ceremony for just a few months, in consideration of the many advantages to be derived. However, he begged a day to consider the matter, that he might consult with Polly about it, and though the said consultation was attended by many sighs and tears, the result of it was that she consented, and consequently he consented too. Perhaps he would not have been in such a hurry to consent had he known that a few days before Miss Holroyd had sought an interview with the ship-carpenter, the husband of the woman where Polly lodged. If he could have heard the conversation that took place between the carpenter and his mistress he would have known that if by some accident he had slipped down and broken both his legs any day before the sailing of the Dolphin it would have been a piece of great good fortune."

"Miss Margaret showed the carpenter a little square box, and said, in the course of her conversation with him, and when they had come to understand each other perfectly, 'Look at it well. Take it in your hand and make yours if perfectly familiar with the shape and feel of it, in case you should have to find it in the dark. I will take care that it is placed in the right-hand corner of the top drawer of the supercargo's strong box. You shall have a

key of the strong box, and a letter to act as I have already directed you. You will find your wife there or by fifty guineas than

nothing less than to watch his opportunity during the voyage, steal into the supercargo's cabin, abstract the little box from the iron chest, and simply pitch it overboard. There was nothing of value in the little box, Miss Margaret declared, only certain papers of a dangerous sort the firm had, against her will, agreed to carry out to India. However, he took the five guineas, and promised as fair as any carpenter could. And to a great extent he meant fair; that is, as between rogues; but not to the fullest extent. He meant to do his best with the false keys, and to obtain possession of the little box; but throwing it overboard was quite another matter. 'What is worth fifty guineas to destroy for somebody must be worth fifty guineas to preserve for somebody else,' said Mr. Carpenter, as, after turning the matter over in his mind two or three days before the Dolphin sailed, he found a job at her bows, and meanwhile contrived to cut out a plug by the dolphin's tail large enough to hold the little box, he intended to steal out of the strong chest."

"Well, the Dolphin sailed with the carpenter and Uncle Simon on board, and everything was arranged according to Miss Margaret's desire. All went merrily as a marriage bell. The weather was fair, and my uncle enjoyed the voyage amazingly. There was one damper on the spirits of the crew, and that was, that one evening, when the Dolphin had been at sea about three weeks, while the supercargo was taking a glass with the captain in his cabin, a sudden cry of 'Man overboard!' was raised, and though they could see him struggling in the water, and then threw a grating to him in the first place, and lowered a boat in the second, they didn't recover him. It was the ship-carpenter. How he came to tumble over the side was a mystery. Of course, when certain other matters came to light, it was not hard to guess at the fact that the vessel had selected that evening to execute Miss Holroyd's commission; that he had accomplished it as far as unlocking the chest, securing the little box, and locking it again went; but that in proceeding to carry out his own private and particular part of the rogues' scheme he miscarried."

"Well, by-and-by the voyage came to an end, and then the loss of the diamond cross was discovered. I don't know how much it was worth; an enormous sum, anyhow—five or six thousand pounds at the least. The worst of it was, it was not missed until my uncle had made several trips ashore and knocked about the town a bit, as young men will coming off a long voyage. It was a very black case against him. It was plain that the locks, which were of a peculiar make, had not been tampered with; the keys he wore night and day round his neck, attached to a bit of whipcord. The jewel was gone; he had been lodging ashore, and had been seen in company to whom the gift of a diamond cross would be highly acceptable. He had no explanation to offer, not the least; so they brought him back under arrest, and, Holroyd and Petching prosecuting, he was, as I before told you, tried and sentenced to transportation for life."

"Now comes the oddest part of the story. Simon had a brother, Michael; my father, that is to say; a shipbreaker by trade, and many years older than Simon. He was the man that befriended uncle at the trial, paying down, as I have heard him say, a hundred and nine guineas for lawyers' fees alone. However, he was a man in a large way of business, and could afford it; not but that he would have sold the last ton of copper in his yard rather than his brother Simon should have lost the chance of clearing up the charge against him."

"Father's place was somewhere by Gravesend. I've just the barest recollection of it myself—close by the water-side, with a cottage at the end of the yard, and a little garden, with scarlet-runners growing up strings in front of the parlour window. Another thing I recollect, too; and that is, that in the garden there was a summer-house, with a path leading up to it, and that on each side of the path were planted the figure-heads of all the ships that came to the yard to be broken up."

"Well, one day, eleven years and two months after poor uncle Simon had been sent to Botany Bay, my father got a letter from an agent asking him to take a trip over to Sheerness to see a merchant-ship that was there for sale at a wonderfully low figure. The agent sent particulars of its tonnage and condition; and as my father was not very well at the time, he sent word to the agent, 'Buy her and send her home.'"

"She was bought and sent home—right home to the gate before father saw her, for his gout was worse, and he had to lie a-bed. The agent came up in her."

"What's her name?" asked my father.

"The Dolphin."

"The what? Who's the owner?"

"Parsons, of Rochester."

"Did she always belong to Parsons?"

"No; he bought her of Holroyd and Petching six years ago."

"Father was not a man to give way to his feelings, but when he heard that the ship which had brought his poor brother Simon into such trouble had come to him to be broken up he was completely done over, and turned his face over on to the pillow and took on to that degree that the agent crept out of the room and down stairs and told my mother she had better go up and see what was the matter."

"However, there was nothing to do but break up the ship, and she was broken up, and, as was customary, her figure-head was carried to the summer-house path to keep company with the rest. For old acquaintance sake, as it were, however, father had this particular figure-head placed close to the bower in which he sometimes sat to smoke a pipe. He sat in there with my mother to smoke a pipe on the Sunday following the day on which the last figure-head was fixed, and their talk was very naturally about Uncle Simon. It was not a very cheerful conversation, as you may imagine, and presently, as he heaved a sigh, father tapped the bowl of his pipe on the dolphin's tail to knock the ashes out of it. It gave out a hollow sound. He tapped again, this time with his knuckles. 'Humph,' said he, and then he pulled out his knife and tapped with the handle of it. It sounded hollower than ever. He unclasped the blade and scraped the paint away a bit, and then, spying a crevice, he put the point of the knife into it, prised out the plug that wretched carpenter had fixed in; and there lay the little box with the diamond cross in it, for stealing which Uncle Simon was undergoing transportation for life."

"Nobody, except my father and mother and my father's lawyer, ever knew exactly what took place after the discovery was made. It is known, however, that father started within an hour for Lincoln's-inn-fields, London, and that there was an interview, on Monday afternoon, between the lawyer and my father and Miss Margaret, or rather, Mrs. Margaret; for by this time she had married old Petching's son, her uncle being dead. It was no use making a fuss, so there was no fuss made. However, Uncle Simon was home by the end of the year; and, judging from the stretch of land he bought hereabouts (which is our native place, you must understand), he must have found a tidy lot of money somewhere. However, that's neither here nor there; they are all dead and gone now. God rest the worst of them! We keep the old dolphin, though. Indeed, to tell you the truth, it is in the will that we shall, with full particulars about wearing the sign of it, and making merry over it on Christmas Day, and a lot of other nonsense, as anyone out of the family must think it. And do you know, Sir," continued Mr. Kedge, affectionately patting the dolphin's head, "we have grown so used to see the scaly old fellow amongst us when the candles are lit and storytelling begins, that it would seem like somebody dead if anything was to happen to him."

And, giving him another affectionate pat, and carefully closing his snuff-box, Mr. Kedge set the dolphin upright, wheeled him to his proper place, and pinned his brown holland cloak about him."

J. G.

CHRISTMAS IN HEAVEN.

'Tis a beautiful, fresh spring morning;
Draw close to the window my chair
I wish I could I walk in the garden,
And taste the sweet, bloom-scented air.
Consumption's pale captive I wither,
And feel not the gladness it brings;
While zephyrs are playing with daisies,
And swallows are flashing their wings.
Come, take my hand gently, my darling,
For thou and I, dearest, must part;
Consumption, dread vampire, is draining
Each drop from the fount of my heart.
The cold hand of Death will soon gather
These roses that flush on my cheek,
And methinks I can hear the stern sexton
A-digging my grave while I speak.

The lilacs and violets blossom,
Flowers follow where May hath trod;
The blue waves are dancing to music,
A carpet of bloom is the sod.
God's world is an Eden of beauty
For all who have health to enjoy;
Oh, would I were half as gay-hearted
As you carolling shepherd-boy!

Hail, rose-mantled Summer! glad season!
Thy warm beams shall lure me away
To blossoming lanes, and green meadows,
Mid soft odours of new-mown hay.
The corn in the valleys is waving,
The blithe choristers fill the sky,
The bees in the heather are humming,
While here with sick fancies I sigh.

Bright Hope over nature, decaying,
Its merciful sceptre sways;
Oh, lead me along by the woodlands,
To bask in the sun's golden rays!
And read from the page of the Poet,
Those songs 'tis enchantment to hear,
And I will forget in the rapture
The cruel Destroyer is near.

I feel so much better, my darling,
I thank my kind Maker in prayer:
Come hither, my dear little daughter,
And twine a few buds in my hair.
Now purple and gold gleam the mountains
Far off in the blushing west.
The sun smiles a farewell of sorrow
That thrills through my panting breast.

Brown Autumn comes reeling with fruitage,
The orchards are russet and red,
Yet still I lament on my pillow,
Unable to hold up my head.
God's bountiful hand scatters blessings,
His banquet is full and is free,
But I am consumed by a cancer,
Like fruit on a sin-blighted tree.

The leaves whirl in showers from the branches,
Bestrewn by the pitiless blast,
Like hopes which I fondly have cherished,
And leave me forsaken at last.
Beyond the cold hills there's a refuge—
A home in the Good Shepherd's breast,
Where the wicked shall cease from troubling,
And the weary shall be at rest.

I've heard the strange music of angels
Three nights in my chamber, I trow;
I know by that sign I am dying—
The dew of youth yet on my brow.
Lay thy hand on my heart, my darling,
And feel how its pulses grow faint;
I yearn for God's flowery love-kingdom,
Whose wonders no pencil can paint.

A pale-visaged weaver, comes Winter,
And deftly he weaveth my shroud,
And the snow and the wind intermingle,
And knock at my window aloud.
I knew that his dark stormy weather
Would thrill me and kill me with cold,
And long ere the primrose shall blossom,
My heart will lie under the mould.

The twilight steals softly and faintly,
My children, come kneel by my bed;
One kiss—and the last one for ever:
You'll think of me oft when I'm dead.
No love can be like your dear mother's;
And from you, sweet prattlers, to part,
And in the world leave you poor orphans,
It breaketh, it breaketh my heart.

My chair will be vacant at Christmas,
But let not your bosoms be riven;
Rejoice that Our Father hath called me
To spend Christmas with him in heaven.
Yon crystalline snow-flake will glitter
In the sunset's bejewelled crest;
My glorified spirit in splendour
Will shine in the realms of the blest.

SHELDON CHADWICK.

OFF DUTY.

It would be difficult to discover whether the dignity of office and the sense of authority affords much consolation to the protectors of the public peace during this season of the year; and it may safely be asserted that the policeman who preserves a sense of jollity and genial Christmas fellowship is a man to be made much of as a choice spirit.

Fancy being reduced to the necessity of making up your mind whether it is best to have your days or your nights to yourself. To enjoy the luxury of an after-dinner nap, a cosy pipe by the fire, and a mug of hot tea; to be followed by a night in the lonely, cheerless streets, with occasional visits with "a charge" to a close, evil-smelling, gas-lighted station-house; or to wake up suddenly in the chill grey morning with the knowledge that you must linger all day self-contained and solitary amidst a busy crowd; or wander drearily along dull suburban streets with a north-east wind cutting like a knife through the coarse blue cloth of your uniform, and treating your new helmet as though it were the cowl of a patent chimney-pot.

The policeman's view of Christmas may well be a strange one, but then, if you come to that, what must his view of life be? What strange things he sees, what queer disclosures he has heard, what varied experiences he has become acquainted with during his inspection of that wretched side of the great human question with which he is most familiar.

Looking with a fixed expression of preternatural sagacity over that leather stock of his as he stands beating his worsted gloves together at corners where he can command a view of things in general; how many passengers he can account for whose daily life is a mystery to half the world beside—that half of the world which doesn't know how the other half live. What a terrible number of his fellow men avoid that judicial eye, and with only a furtive glance go on their way "after no good;" what a large percentage,

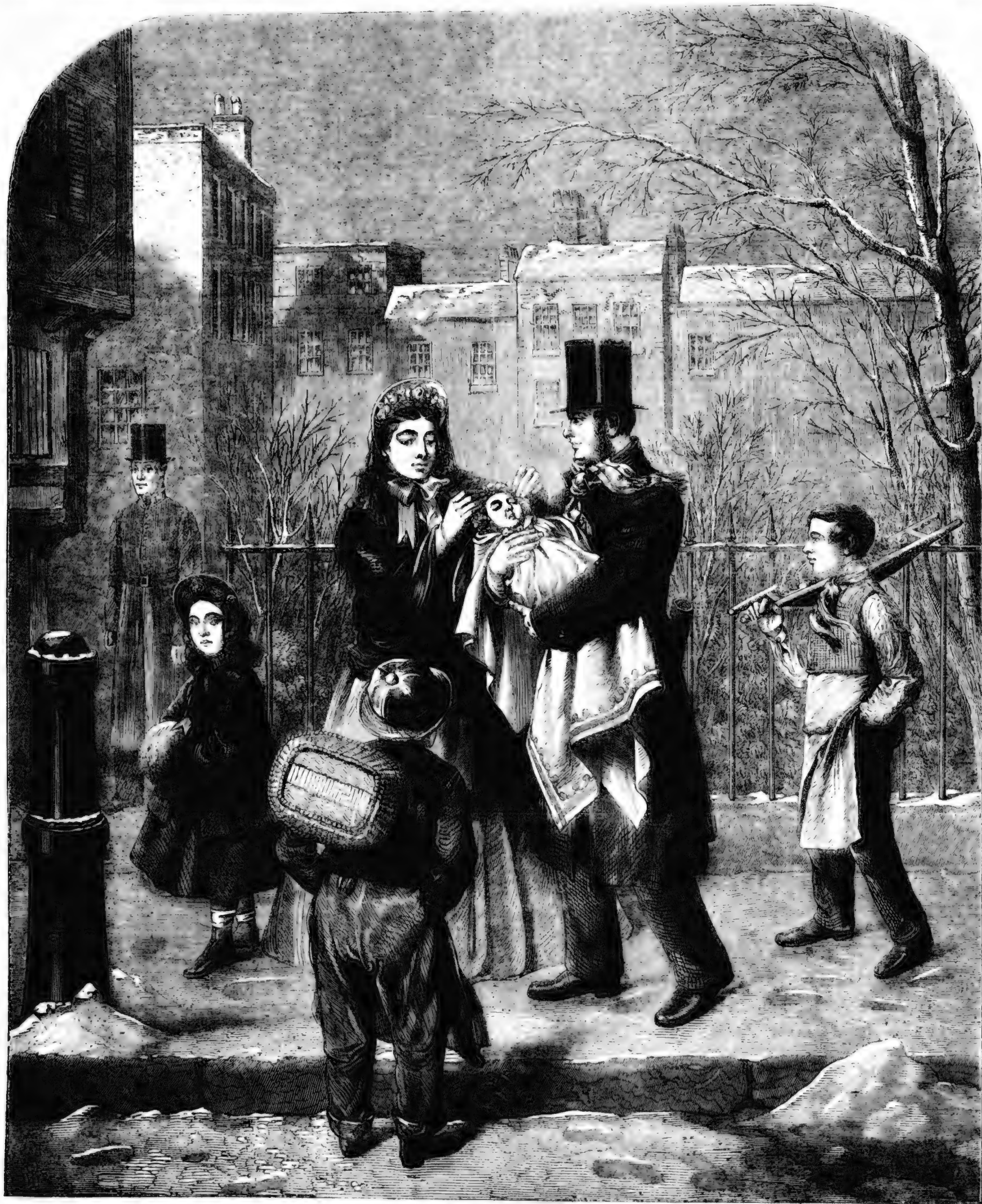
catching sight of his stiff figure, vanish suddenly round adjacent corners, conscious that they are likely to be "wanted" for something unmistakably bad. How he is "blarneyed" by itinerant dealers who fear the necessity for "moving on," appealed to with wistful looks by ownerless boys; made the temporary guardian of lost infants; tempted by friendly "cads," with the price of a quartern of rum in their side-pockets; vituperated by fierce females, under spirituous excitement; gravely reasoned with by inebriated persons who insist that the liberty of the subject consists in the privilege of defying the universe with their backs against a tavern shutter and

their hats in the kennel; fetched to quell domestic difficulties; referred to for the arbitration of interminable disputes; and, in short, expected to be a grave, dispassionate, and judicious administrator of human affairs, at a salary of a pound or five and twenty shillings a week.

What has he not witnessed since he first made one of that file of men whose boots tramp with such measured tread as they are mustered for night duty?

Respectable vice, warm and full of meat, rolling to the newest entertainment in snug broughams disreputable mis-

fortune, shivering in threadbare garments at tavern doors in the hope of finding somebody to bestow a casual penny to relieve the gnawing of hunger, or with an illusive sense of warmth in the bright glare of gas reflected on the wet pavement outside. Little naked feet, frozen purple by half-thawed ice, and little faces, prematurely old and haggard, huddled in bundles of rags, in half-finished buildings or under the dark arches of railways; gaunt and famished men, standing in the shadows of dark walls, and thinking which would be best—the chance of casual relief at the union-gate or a night in



OFF DUTY: GOING OUT TO DINNER—(DRAWN BY WARWICK REYNOLDS)

the police-cell, with the possibility of a successful robbery; women with children in their arms crouching at the workhouse door to wait for the cheerless shelter and the coarse meal which may sustain life for another day; young girls with some remains of a former beauty hurrying swiftly before the cutting wind to look over a bridge into the dark, sluggish tide; thieves slinking like shadows into dim doorways in London slums, or giving a warning whistle as they hear the clump of official footsteps; burglars smoking in the "taps" of low beershops, and waiting for those "implements" two hundredweight of which were seized last year by the police at different times, and finally sent to Woolwich Arsenal to be melted into shot and shell. Dancing-saloons where German sugar-bakers and foreign sailors assemble moodily, and, on

the first revival of a recent quarrel, draw long knives upon each other; common lodging-houses, where thieves sleep with one eye open, and where broken-down mechanics, besotted and ruined gentlemen, labourers, cadgers, and tramps are the strange bedfellows brought together by poverty; gay saloons where painted vice runs riot and despises magisterial fines; thieves' haunts, where publicans are receivers, and "sporting gents" know something about lost dogs: these, and that last scene of all which results in a police bill headed "Dead Body Found," are amongst the nightly experiences of the active and intelligent officer. And yet he is often a good-hearted, genial fellow, with an honest touch of true pity in his heart and a pang of real pain for the erring and unfortunate. I declare I am acquainted with an officer

who is too stont to be particularly active, but who possesses uncommon intelligence, whose round, ruddy, good-natured face is recognised with infinite civility and kindness in one of the worst quarters of this many-quartered metropolis. His manner is so fatherly and forbearing that the unfortunate wretches of the district seem to regard him with the sort of reverence traditionally accorded to the village pastor in the country and I am convinced that, at this season, his presence is as suggestive of Christmas festivity as though he were a sort of Temperance Bacchus in a blue uniform.

Whoever has observed a policeman in the quarters of his married brethren in the force, must have noticed his wonderful way with children. The fact is, he "takes to children," and children, when



INNOCENCE.

mestic life. Few people have ever seen a soldier nursing a baby, and he is generally a poor hand at it; in fact, soldiers can very seldom assume the manners and customs of civilians even when they are off duty. Except when he is tipsy or huddled into a railway-carriage, the soldier seldom finds any ordinary apartment quite large enough for him; and even when he is taking his pleasure, he wants a very large space to take it in. Now, the policeman off duty drops his officialism in a manner quite marvellous. Once remove the white-striped armet, and he walks about the streets in the most casual and unobtrusive manner, with all the rigidity shaken out of his shoulders and quite slack about the knees. He generally carries a bundle, too, and is quite jocular over a pint of beer at the tavern door, where yesterday he was quite another man.

So will it be when he has his turn off duty on Christmas Day; and, having decided to take his fresh-coloured, hard-working wife to see "the old people," (they are taking care of an empty house, and live in the lower storey), carries his own baby, and adds a bright worsted comforter to his uniform, as a token that he is taking holiday.

So wonderful an impression does this domestic exhibition make, even upon the minds of the tradesmen's boys who have seen him come out, that they quite forget to call out, "Crush-er," or to make any allusions to the *goose*, the *mutton*, or the *rabbit-pie*, to which he is vulgarly supposed to be so warmly attached.

T. A.



GUILT.

INNOCENCE AND GUILT.

THIS is a naughty world. On whatever other subject theologians, politicians, philosophers may differ, they are all agreed on this point; and amongst innumerable evidences of the lamentable moral condition of mankind, none is more obvious than the fact that guilt

they know him, take to him. By-the-way, what strange notions policemen's children must have on the subject of "being taken up;" and how strangely they must themselves be regarded by other children as those in whose parent is invested such a dread potentiality!

Yes, the force, as a whole, is seen to advantage in do-



BREAKING UP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: THE BASHFUL YOUNG GENTLEMAN.—(DRAWN BY FLORENCE CLAXTON.)

and innocence are every day confounded. The most artless simplicity is constantly treated as though it were hypocrisy, and a delightful ingenuousness which seeks no concealment is mistaken for deep design for some unworthy end.

In the same way, evil effrontery boldly challenges public opinion under the name of straightforward honesty, and unblushing vice is attributed to eccentricity, infirmity of purpose, or mistaken intention.

Now, to take an instance. Nobody believed that Flora Bellot was sweetly unconscious of the presence of that sprig of mistletoe when she sat down under the portrait of Sir Wapps Wyper, at Wyper Hall, last Christmas Eve. It may be doubted whether even our Artist, who has chosen this subject for happy illustration and was present on the occasion, quite believed in the poor young creature's exquisite simplicity of character until overwhelming testimony, in the shape of a naive declaration that she was unacquainted with the ancient Druidical custom annually celebrated under the white-berried plant.

Flora had come down some days before to spend the Christmas holidays—come down with an open-eyed, childish ignorance of conventionalities which was in itself inexpressibly charming, and contrasted in a very striking manner with the excellent though rather florid taste displayed in her toilet.

So sweetly simple was she in her artless questions and unstudied remarks, that the more worldly-minded of her auditors were sometimes startled by the innocence which could remain unembarrassed after the utterance of observations in which they saw a meaning that never presented itself to that sweet, unconscious soul, who opened her eyes still wider with surprised inquiry when she at last noticed their suppressed laughter or the quick glances of suspicion with which she was often regarded.

She was "a child of Nature." That was the title which she had bestowed upon herself; and it had been at all events partially adopted by the household at Wyper Hall, the female members of the family not being quite certain whether Flora was "a silly creature" or "an artful girl," the younger Wapps believing that she was "rather soft, but up to most things;" and Sir Wapps himself regarding her, as from an intellectual tower, in the light of a goodnatured but rather flighty young person singularly unsophisticated for a girl of her age, it, as he had been informed, she were really eight and twenty.

As to the visitors, their opinions of Miss Bellot were often indicative of the influence of a fashionable education upon the best sympathies of our nature. Some experienced matrons regarded her with positive dislike; more than one young lady was heard to speak of her with undisguised contempt, and two or three young gentlemen who had long left school were seen to wink at each other with a wicked prelude of disbelief in the purity and innocence which they were too corrupt to appreciate.

Sadly enough, even the servants were tainted with the same blighting scepticism which influenced so many of their superiors. The elements of disbelief in virtue had found their representatives in the kitchen; and the cook, in conversation with the housemaid, was heard to declare that if she (the cook) was "such a artful minx as that Miss Belter, which she's no good, though butter, as the sayin' is, wouldn't melt in her mouth," she'd "go and drown herself." In reply to which the family coachman, who was a married man, and should have known better, replied that innocence was "all my eye."

Now, two of the visitors at Wyper Hall, though young in years, may be said to have been notorious examples of guilt—that sort of guilt which, hidden under the guise of frankness and truth, is blind to the beauty of the real simplicity of character which, while it is unacquainted with the cynical and repressive regulations of a vitiated society, is unsuspecting and full of a sweet, youthful trustfulness.

To nobody did Flora Bellot display these characteristics more unreservedly than to young Arlington Rowe, who, having left college, was studying for the Bar, as an agreeable diversion until he should come into a very handsome property on the death of his maternal grandfather.

The questions she asked this young man were sometimes amusing, doubtless; but then it was part of her nature to seek for information on books, on opinions, on every subject; with which she thought the listener was acquainted; and so retentive was her memory that she could resume the conversation at any moment, and express her desire to know more of that delightful subject which her informant understood so charmingly.

It often happened that, in this way Arlington would find himself seated alone with her at one part of the room, while the rest of the company, some of whom were evidently making satirical remarks, were gathered round the piano or had assembled for a dance.

Unlike this guileless-minded and self-conscious young man, she exhibited no embarrassment except that of surprise and always explained that she had been seeking knowledge on a subject of interest.

In the same way, when Arlington sometimes walked on the lawn in the evening to smoke his cigar, he would suddenly discover that Miss Bellot had slipped on her crimson hooded cloak, and was standing just in front of him full of an enthusiastic admiration for the starry heavens. Would it be believed that an evil world had so far influenced him that he more than once attempted to pass her without notice, and would have committed that grave error but for the childlike confidence with which she placed her white hand upon his shoulder?

One thing she never could understand, and everybody was under the impression that she had said so, though nobody quite remembered that she had made the remark to them personally, and that was—why most of the ladies, and all the gentlemen, visiting Wyper Hall should so admire May Thorpe?

"Was she really, now, what you would call a beauty, you know? She (Flora) is no judge at all. She was a very clever horsewoman, was she not? A delightful accomplishment, but requiring great courage, she should think; though most delightful to gallop through the fields, and even to jump over the hedges, if there were any gentlemen there to assist one in case of accident. May Thorpe was much admired—no doubt girls who rode well were always—oh, yes; but not what would be called clever, was she? No time for much else but field sports, perhaps. No. Didn't it sometimes make girls more like companions to gentlemen? How nice it would be to have a very quiet pony or an old steady horse, and go out on Christmas morning! but then, if one hadn't a habit, of course it would be impossible with gentlemen. What a pity that May Thorpe's was too large in the waist: she might borrow it; but then, what a fright it would look!"

These were her artless remarks to Arlington Rowe on the morning of Christmas Eve; and it was on the same evening that she appeared in the drawing-room charmingly dressed, and sat down under the portrait of Sir Wapps Wyper, from the frame of which descended a spray of seasonable mistletoe. Perhaps she had never noticed it, though it had been there for two or three days; but even if she had, its connection with the osculatory rites of Christmas was entirely unknown to her. Her eyes, too, were fixed on Arlington, who, with a group of men and one or two ladies, stood about the fire. She was a little surprised, but innocently unembarrassed by the rude laughter which greeted her when she took her seat and said,

"Mr. Rowe, I want you to tell me something; but I must whisper to you—so come here."

She thought at first that they were laughing because she had a black on her nose, and entreated somebody to tell her if she had, and to come and blow it off. Will it be credited that Arlington never moved, and asked if somebody else wouldn't do. Brutal young man!

When the nature of the plant, called mistletoe, was explained to her by the youngest of the Wypers, a child of eleven, she asked goodhumouredly, whether they really thought she would have sat there had she known the mystic meaning of those berries, and more than one man there repented of his rudeness, so that she soon had quite a party round her chair.

On the following morning a party went out for a long ride over Wyper-common, and May Thorpe was of the party. Arlington Rowe, who had intended to accompany her, came down late to breakfast, and found that she had started without him; yet, so misguided was he that, though Flora Bellot, in the freshest of morning robes, handed him his tea and began to discourse on Tennyson with

beautiful admiration, he left her, almost without apology, and hung about the stables, smoking cigars, all the morning. Watching him from her chamber-window, Flora saw him suddenly fling his cigar away and take a sort of little gilded pill from a box in his waistcoat-pocket, take it, too, in a very nasty way; for he began to masticate it instead of swallowing it like a man. Then, he made a sudden bolt into the house, and, as she saw from the staircase, took up his station behind the front door, with something green and glistening in his hand.

Now, while he stood there in ambush, May Thorpe came from the stables where she had left her horse—came right up to the already half-opened door—and must have seen him trying to hide himself behind it. She must have seen the green spray which he held in his hand, too; for in his guilty confusion he held it quite beyond the edge of the door. And yet, seeing all this, she came deliberately in, and was kissed without a struggle.

When she reached the bed-room floor, she heard the low sounds of female hysteria in Flora Bellot's apartment, and, upon inquiring what was the matter, that innocent and confiding girl said that she was afraid she had done something to offend Mr. Arlington Rowe.

Her grief was mollified, however, by the late arrival of Cornet Spooner, with whom (as he smoked his cigar on the lawn) she walked and talked, to his ineffable delight; for he, too, was a "child of nature," though he had never discovered the fact before. And when she prattled, with her hand resting on his manly arm, he said, "By Jove! it was devilish kind, now, to take pity on a fellow that way." In a couple of days he confided to young Wapps Wyper that "By Jove! that sweet creature, Miss Bellot, was—by Jove! you know—the most—ah—sweet creature, and all that; you know, that he'd ever met in the whole course of his existence."

In four months Flora Bellot became the Honourable Flora Spooner, while Arlington Rowe is still only engaged to May Thorpe; so that, after all, innocence is rewarded and guilt sometimes punished. T.A.

"BREAKING-UP."

WHO does not remember those first parties of the "festive season" which formed, as it were, the connecting link between school and the Christmas holidays by uniting both—the grim decorum of the class-room scarcely mitigated by unwonted decorations—the authoritative commands of the governess with difficulty modulated to a polite imitation of the requests of ordinary life? What a ridiculous simulation it was when, as each pupil came in with her hair shining in those glossy ringlets that were only attained by two days' previous curl-papery, the Misses Walkintwo (they kept Eddystone House Establishment for Young Ladies, and there were thirty of us—twenty day-girls and ten boarders) came forward to receive her! With what a flutter of genuine pleasure we all admired each other's dresses, and got into corners to recount all the difficulties and mysteries of the toilet, although each one of us had known for weeks previously what all the rest were going to wear! The reception by our governesses, who each wore a smile supposed to express cheerful admiration and affectionate solicitude, was so completely carried out that even we boarders, who had willingly put up with a light bread-and-butter luncheon in place of dinner, and had been soundly rated at least twice since breakfast, felt as we entered the room that we had helped to decorate for the occasion as though we had come in our private carriages from some remote district, and were now being welcomed with all the delight which would be naturally felt on our escaping unhurt from the dangers of the road. Nothing could be more decorously elegant than the bearing of the eldest Miss Walkintwo (Selina) as she advanced to shake hands with each one of us; nothing more confidential than the manner of her younger sister (Barbara) as she invited us to come nearer the fire (just burning up, with a great smell of damp wood and turpentine); nothing more critically genial than the way in which Mrs. Walkintwo (their mamma) called each of us "my dear," as she eyed us over and took our hands between the long fingers of a lemon-coloured glove. How we all sat round at a moderate distance from the fire, not quite certain what was expected from us, and by no means able to dismiss the impression that a class-room silence was indispensable, until some girl more imaginative than the rest would whisper something, and two or three of us would begin to giggle, and a series of nudges and pinches would provoke an outburst of suppressed hysteria, at which, to our great surprise, the Misses Walkintwo would smile lively approval and Mrs. W. would laugh out quite loud, without in the least knowing, any more than we did, what had occasioned our merriment.

What a subdued murmur of giggling, and whispering, and rustling of book-muslin would arise as the sound of cab-wheels and a long series of rat-tats announced the arrival of the day-scholars with fresh toilet mysteries and wonderful realisations of long-anticipated ball-dresses! With what grace would the music-master (Professor Herr Strumoff) come with a prodigious double knock, and, ejaculating, "Ach, but dis is beautiful!—dis is sharming; young ladies, accept my most profound compliments!" bowed with the utmost grace, in a dress-coat with watered-silk facings, and with his moustaches so waxed that they almost lifted off his spectacles.

Our writing-master, poor old Mr. Shandy, in his dingy black suit, was quite eclipsed by this splendid apparition, and retired to a corner where, with a large bandanna handkerchief on his knee, he sipped a warm infusion of "good family souchong at three-and-four," and beamed benignantly on all around. He was happy enough, for his daughter was there too—Rose Shandy, who knew so many Christmas games and was so handy with the little ones of the party, that she was asked every year, and the Walkintwos were always kind to her. Heaven bless them for that! If Herr Strumoff was grand, what shall be said of M. Lejeune, the dancing-master (his real name was said to be Levy, and he was even reported to be of Jewish origin), who appeared in a coat lined with white satin, a gold-embroidered vest, and his feet encased in varnished boots so small that they were nearly covered by his trousers, and he seemed to be dancing on ebony wooden legs? M. Lejeune kissed his hands in the ballet manner as he came in—he was always a privileged person, and highly respectable—and "Madam and Meeser, dis is von of ze greatest pleasures of ma lifes." M. Lejeune always spoke in an accent more or less foreign; though he had been known under sudden excitement to express himself in very ordinary English, and with no trace whatever of his foreign birth, except a slight nasal twang and a difficult syllabification of the S. I have heard, too, that on one occasion, when Herr Strumoff addressed him in French, he turned red, and asked him a little warmly why he couldn't talk English. There was no more exciting event than the arrival of M. Lejeune, except on one occasion, when the elder brother of one of the girls came to fetch her home and stayed, at the solicitation of Mrs. Walkintwo, who sent a servant to fetch in a friend who was waiting for the brother outside.

I remember that we all believed this friend to be an officer in the army, because he was buttoned up to the chin in a single-breasted frock-coat and wore his hair long, besides being an elegant dancer. I have since heard, however, that he was clerk to a wine merchant. The brother was most amusing, and gave such funny recitations that we were quite dull when he went away. The brothers, generally, were not very formidable; for the little ones who came with the day-girls we knew very well, and the older boys were, if possible, more bashful than we were, and stood altogether at one end of the room, fidgeting their neckties or bursting their gloves, and muttering to each other as though they had come to a funeral and were waiting for the undertaker. I have a fancy that even some of these youths were regarded suspiciously by the Misses Walkintwo, although the eldest of them, who might have been seventeen, professed to be a "misogamist," by which many of the girls understood that he devoted himself to some newly-invented musical instrument. I shall never forget the sort of ecstatic terror which invariably seized that unfortunate young Tawley—the most awkward of all our male guests—when Mrs. W. took him, as it were, in tow and bore down with him to that end of the room where the elder girls assembled, giggling and making spiteful remarks upon the particular brother who happened at that moment to give symptoms of "choosing a partner." With what a look of mingled reproach

and delight did the devoted Tawley learn that Miss Pike was engaged to dance with Miss Rose, and with what stammered apologies did he relapse into gloom when Mrs. W. said, "Oh! nonsense; young ladies dance together, indeed; I never heard of such a thing."

What a strange sense of scarcity and yet of plenty was always present during the introduction of the "refreshments!" What attenuated bread and butter; what limp sandwiches, made of boiled beef and ham from a celebrated shop a few streets off; what dense seedsake and unsatisfying pastry; what a flavour of yesterday's mustard in some of the sandwiches; what a sloppy distribution of sweet tepid negus—very weak of wine, but very strong of lemon peel and mixed spice; above all, what a genteel struggle on the part of the Misses Walkintwo to keep up appearances, and to exhibit so much real good temper to a party of giddy, thoughtless girls who were the wearisome trouble of their daily lives!

Eddystone House has been shut up now for some years; for really, after all, both the sisters married, and married very well, too, and one of them, at least, has children of her own; but I'm sure she can never forget the old "breakings up."

T. A.

HOW I SPENT A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AT AN INN.

IT was no use attempting to continue my journey that night. The snow was coming down as thick as blankets, and in another hour or so the road would not be distinguishable. It was very provoking, no doubt, to lose my Christmas dinner at home and have to stay at an inn; but there was no alternative.

I had been detained in town till the latest moment by the expected arrival of a brother from abroad. He did not come. So, after making a very cold and lonely journey all the morning by the mail-coach to I—, I hired a horse, intending to push on home at once. But I had not left I— long before the snow began to come down in large deliberate flakes, that seemed to say, "Don't hurry, there's lots of time; we've come to spend Christmas!"

So, when I reached S—, where I had intended to bait and rest awhile, I found myself compelled to give up all idea of going on, and to satisfy myself with Christmas at "mine inn." I comforted myself with the thought that there would most likely be several people in like plight, and that, being thrown together in this way, we should become sociable, and perhaps spend a cheerful evening, after all.

I turned into the stable-yard and dismounted. It was getting quite dark, and I could see a light in the stable; so I led my horse to the door. The ostler and his help were littering down the horses for the night.

"Come, my man," said I, "just put my horse into that spare stall for me; I'm going to put up for the night."

"That stall! Well, no, Sir, I can't do that; it's—it's engaged."

I observed that he had started up in great alarm when I spoke, and he seemed hardly to have recovered himself when he answered me.

"Oh, well! I'm not particular about a stall; any one will do."

The two came out of the stable simultaneously. It was very odd, but they both seemed anxious not to be left alone in the stable a second even.

"You're littering down rather early, eh? I suppose you are going to spend Christmas as soon as you've done work."

"No, Sir. But we like to litter 'em down early in that stable."

"Give him some gruel," said I, as he took the saddle off my hack.

"Yes, Sir. Jim, go and fetch the bucket."

"Where is it?"

"In the other stable."

"Then you may fetch it yourself. I'm bound I won't go there—no, not for all the buckets in the world."

"Come along with me, then," said the other; and off they went, and soon returned with the bucket. I could not help noticing that there was something odd in all this, and I questioned the ostler. He evaded the point, and, as may be supposed, only increased my curiosity. I determined to learn more of him and his mystery.

On entering the inn I found that mine host had a house full—but not of visitors. He had a large family party staying with him that occupied all the bed-rooms except one. S— was a quiet, out-of-the-way place, and there was little custom in winter, especially about Christmas time, so he called all his friends and relations around him at that season, and spent it very jollily.

I don't suppose he was aware that I was in the house, or he would probably have extended his invitation to me, after the manner of all worthy hosts. The barnmaid was the only person who took any notice of me, and that was not of the most agreeable kind. She was rather well-preserved, this lady, and had an appearance of being disappointed and of having found that men were faithless creatures. She, in short, snubbed me. When I asked her if I could have a bed, she first said "No," and then, almost immediately afterwards, "Yes," and told the chambermaid to "show the gentleman into No. 10;" at which the chambermaid opened her mouth and stared. But Miss Bitson, the barnmaid, was a despot of an Oriental description, it was plain; for the girl did not venture to question the order. She took the candle and showed me to the door; but go in she would not, though I pointed out that there were no towels.

Altogether, it appeared to me that I had got into a very extraordinary place, and was not likely to spend my Christmas in exuberant merriment. I put the candle on the dressing-table, and, sitting down, began to picture to myself the dear old house at home, with the lights flashing from all the windows, the oak wainscot glistening with the dancing flame of the logs, and the music and laughter ringing through the hall. I sighed. There was a very curious echo in the room—at least, that was the only way in which I could account for it, for my sigh was repeated very distinctly, so distinctly that I thought, perhaps, the chambermaid had returned with the towels and was sighing for company's sake. I looked in the direction from which the sound came; but, no; there was nobody there. I thought, however, that perhaps the echo was caused by a cupboard the door of which was standing a little open. My first impulse was to go and shut it; but, somehow, that repeated sigh had made an impression on me that was not pleasant. I was tired, I thought, and my nerves were unstrung. I could not help giving a little shudder, and, in fact, felt so far from comfortable that I took up my candle and fairly scuttled out of the room. In the passage I met the girl with the towels. She looked me hard in the face. "Take them into my room," said I as I passed her. As I was turning the stairs I happened to look back. She was standing just where I left her, and actually threw the towels on the mat outside my door, turned round, and came down stairs after me at a pretty quick trot. "You're an idle hussey," I thought to myself.

As you may fancy, after I had finished my dinner I found the coffee-room rather dull. I had no papers; there were no guests; and there were no books. All of a sudden it occurred to me to send for the ostler and question him about his mysterious conduct. At all events, he would be company.

In a few minutes he came in, and I got him to sit down—which he did on the very edge of the chair—and take a glass of grog. By-and-by I began to question him without alarming him; and about the middle of his third tumbler he grew communicative, and I got something like the following story out of him:—

"About twenty year ago there was a wild lot of chaps in this here neighbourhood—they was wild, I believe you! And the leader of 'em all and the wildest was Squire Wake—Tommy Wake they called him. He was a downright bad lot, he was. When he wasn't hunting he was drinking, and when he wasn't drinking he was hunting; and the way as he run through his property was something startling, I can tell. And he run through more nor his own property, too, which was worse, for he had a wife and one child, though the child, to be sure, was a poor sickly thing. Well, his wife was a very nice, goodhearted kind of creature, I've been told, and very beautiful as a girl, with a deal of money. How she come to marry him, I don't know; but they say he gave her a love-powder, and she was mighty fond of him sure-ly, which one can't suppose to have happened otherwise. She must ha' led a wretched life of it, though her face didn't pity her, you see, for they tell me she was very handsome to the last."

"Well, one winter when he'd run through nearly all her property, as well as his own, he came over here to stop a week to hunt with Lord Lansher's hounds, as was here for the season. Well, he brings a many of his lot with him; and they all put up here, and very jolly they intended to be, no doubt, hunting all day and drinking all night. But they didn't have much hunting; for the very first day as they came, the snow and the frost come too—pretty much the same sort of weather as 'tis now—and so there was an end of their sport. But, bless you! they wasn't to be done. Tommy Wake he orders the master—my present master's father—to have the shutters put up in the club-room, and light up the chandeliers, and keep on sending in liquor by the gallon. It was a mighty fine room then, as they used to hold balls in, and had two large brass chandeliers, holding about two dozen candles each. Well, the shutters was shut, and the candles lit, and that there wild lot they set in—they did; and the orders was they wasn't to be disturbed until the frost broke up. And a very pretty time they had of it, as you may think. They was most of 'em raging drunk in about two days, and they kept at it a week, never sleeping, except when they fell off their chairs under the table.

"But this sort of game couldn't go on for ever, as you'll suppose; not that the master would have stopped it; for he was of a grasping sort, and they paid pretty handsome, these chaps, when they had the money, which some had at that very time, as well he knew. No! 'twasn't he as stopped it, but some of them; for some got tired of it, and some got high-crazed with drink, and didn't know what they was after. But anyhow, at the end of a week, about half a dozen of 'em broke out of the place, whooping, and swearing, and shouting, and goes off to the stable, saddles their horses, and rides off helter-skelter. The snow was quite thick on the ground still, and all the roads was lost past finding; but they wouldn't listen to anything, but off they went, yelling, and blowing their horns, like so many demons.

"Well, the end of them was that three parts of 'em never reached home. Some of 'em fell into gullies as was hid by the snow, and some fell in the river, and some was picked up where they had fallen off their horses and lain till they was sober, and died of starvation. Bless ye! there never was such a clear-out of wild 'uns in this countryside—nor yet, I reckon, in any other.

"Well, at long and at last, they was all gone but Tommy Wake, and he drunk himself to sleep in the chair, and there master left him to get sober. How it came about nobody knows, but it were thought at the time that he slep' off the liquor, and, coming to himself, though out of his mind with 'delectum trimmins,' he went up to his bed-room and hung himself in the cupboard on Christmas Eve, where he were found by the chambermaid next morning; and left his poor widow without a shilling in the world, except heaps of debts as she couldn't pay."

"Well, but what has that to do with the stable?" I asked.

"I'm a coming to it. When they come to look for Tommy Wake's horse, he wasn't in the stable; and he never were heard of again, except that the chap as drives the mail-cart said as he saw a black horse galloping on the river, which were frozen over, with a man in a red coat on his back—a story which was put down at the time to strong ale at I—, which I do not believe to have been the case. And I'll tell you for why. All went pretty quiet for a year, though naturally the room where Tommy Wake hanged himself had not been used, nor never have since, being left to this very day, with his spurs, and whip, and hunting-cap on the pegs in the cupboard, and the little bit of the end of the cravat as he hanged himself with, and as was not took off, owing to his being cut down.

"The ostler, however, he said—and he drew his master's attention to it—that whenever a horse was put into the stall where Tommy Wake's hunter had stood he always seemed as if he hadn't got room, along of there being a horse in the stall already.

"But on the Christmas Eve there was no getting any horse into that stall at all. Lor' bless yer! they kicked, and reared, and pulled back, one after another, until they was forced to give it up as a bad job. But now comes the strange part of it, Sir. As the ostler was grooming down the horse in the next stall, he hears some one in that stall a hissing and rubbing down too. Well, he looked over, but there was no one there, and the sound had stopped; but the very moment he began again, it began, again, and then he looked over—no one there—so it went on till he got fairly skeered, and run in doors. And ever since, on Christmas Eve, if you stand outside that stable, when there's no one inside—leastwise no human being—you hear that hissing and grooming going on. One chap—he was a plucky one, he was—stayed until the grooming was all done, and he said as he saw the stable-door open, and a black horse's head a coming out. But he didn't stop to see any more, he didn't."

"Have you yourself ever observed anything?" I asked.

He drew his chair closer to me, filled his glass, and whispered, "I've seen summat. When I come here first, I come from a distance, and hadn't heard anything of Tommy Wake; and they didn't tell me, first to see what would come, which was mighty kind to me.

"Well, on Christmas Eve, just as 'twas getting dark, I was setting on an upsidown bucket a whistling, and thinking I'd like a pipe, and I'd just took it out of my pocket, and was going to strike a match, when I see a tall gentleman in a cloak come in at the door. I could just see that against the light of the lamp in the yard, and I noticed as he limped on one foot a bit. Well, I took no notice, but struck my match; and, will you believe it, Sir, as that there blue flame came spluttering out I saw—well, the awfulest thing I ever saw. It had great big red eyes, as big as a saucer, and horns; and he had a cloven hoof to one leg, and a tail, and it kep' a wagging slowly, like the lion's down at the fair. I'd only just time to catch a glimpse of this—and pretty frightened I was—while the blue flame was a burning, for I stood there a holding the match like the grim death, afraid to move. When the flame caught the wood it burnt brighter, and then I saw as the party was a very gentlemanly-looking party, all in black, with a very handsome cloak, lined with fur, over his shoulders. He seemed to feel it cold, though, for he shivered uncommon. Well, I made so bold as to ask his business, and he says, Oh! he'd come to see after his horse; which I didn't think as there was one in the stable. But just then I heard a whinny, and just as the match burned down to my fingers I caught sight of a black horse in one of the stalls. Well, I dropt that match and lit another; and what ever do you think? Why, as soon as the blue flame come, there stood that awful creature with the great red eyes again; but the flame caught the wood quick, so that I really could scarce believe my eyes, and there was the civil-spoken gentleman again; and he went into the stall and begun a-grooming the black horse. Well, I couldn't quite tell how I felt, for I was quite sure as I'd seen the devil, and yet I could hardly believe my eyes. So I got as near the door as I could, and I asks the gent if he's going out, for I see him take down the saddle, and he said, Yes, he was. Was I to wait for him? Oh, no! he wouldn't be back till next night. Whereupon, just to see what it was all about, I takes two or three matches out of my pocket and strikes them all at once. There was a pretty bright blue flare, I can tell you, Sir; and I saw enough to make me drop 'em in a jiffy and run indoors, where I falls down in a fit, as you may guess!"

I confess the ostler's story made me feel uncomfortable, and the silence which followed it was far from pleasant; so, just for the sake of saying something, I asked if the personage *did* come back the next night.

"He did, Sir, and he always do. Not as I've seen him; but I've heard him frequent. Hark!"

We listened. I heard a horse come galloping full speed up the street and turn into the inn yard. I ran to the window, and observed a light coming from under the archway, as if the horse had struck a flint with his shoe. I said as much to the ostler; but he shook his head and pointed to the ground. It was bright moonlight now; the snow was several inches deep, and its surface was unbroken by a hoofmark.

This was rather too much of it. I bade the ostler "Good-night!" rang the bell for my candle, and went off to bed. When I reached my room-door, I found the towels lying where the girl had thrown them and picked them up, mentally blessing her inattention. I entered my room, locked my door, and took my coat off. As I did

so, I noticed the place was very scantily furnished, and did not seem as if it had been used for a long time. There wasn't even a chair for one's clothes. However, I recollected there was a cupboard. I went to it, flung open the door, and saw hanging in it an old battered hunting-cup, a hunting-crop, and a pair of spurs, while from a peg, to which it was tightly knotted, hung a bit of white cambric, the end of which presented the appearance of having been cut.

There was no mistake about my room. I burst into a cold perspiration and, in my terror, dropped the candle, which was extinguished by the fall. I scrambled it up in haste, caught up the match-box, which had fallen with it, and was about to strike a light. I paused. What might be the effect of that terrible blue flame? I positively could not muster courage to light the match. I was ashamed to call out, and yet I was almost afraid to move. I was getting faint with alarm, nervousness, and shame at my own cowardice. At last I mustered strength and nerve enough to creep into the farthest corner of the room and sit there, with my back pressed closely against the wall; and in that unenviable position I passed the night. With the first gleam of daylight and the first stir in the house I found courage to make my escape from that dreadful chamber. I did not wait to upbraid the stern barmaid; I paid the ostler what I considered would cover my bill and leave a little margin over for him, as a slight reward for his having made me spend one of the most unpleasant Christmases in my life.

T. H.

A CHRISTMAS FAIRY.

IN my grandfather's château—you must not imagine that my grandfather was a great personage; he was only a poor old soldier, whom everyone esteemed for his bravery, and whom I dearly loved and venerated for his goodness. His château was as old and as poor as himself; gilding was scarce, and its crumbling walls reminded you of the worn and threadbare mantle in which the Spanish beggar so proudly wraps himself. Happily, Providence, which generally equalises matters, had hidden a few holes under the greenest of ivy and the finest of vines—had surrounded the old house by a meadow, through which flowed a babbling brook—had given it a blue sky for a roof, and the chain of the Alps for its majestic horizon.

In my grandfather's château, then, there was a large hall, in which burnt, in winter, an enormous fire. At this fireside two old leather fauteuils were occupied every evening by an old man and a child. The old man had a young mind, an excellent memory, and a lively manner. He was fond of relating tales of the past, and of telling of noble actions, deeds of heroism, and humble traits of virtue. The child listened with profound attention. That old man was my grandfather, and the child myself. The evening generally lasted from seven till ten o'clock, when my grandfather called for his stick and his bed-candle, and retired for the night.

As for me, I sometimes stayed half an hour longer, dreaming as one does dream at twelve years old—my eyes fixed on the glowing wood a hes, which took all sorts of shapes—now a palace, now a hut—throwing out here and there a little bluish flame, which I tried to imagine might be a good fairy, and which threw an indistinct and fantastic reflection on the old and faded tapestry which covered the walls.

One night—it was Christmas Eve, and intensely cold; snow covered the meadows, the wind howled in the chimneys and amongst the shivering pines, and my grandfather, who suffered from old wounds and from rheumatism, had asked for his large bed with serge curtains to be warmed. The large clock in the hall had just struck eleven, and yet I was still musing and castle-building by the fireside, for I held tight in my hand three gold pieces which my grandfather had just given me, saying, "Last Christmas I gave you playthings, but this year I prefer to give you money, so that you may choose for yourself. To-morrow you can go into the town with Pierre, and buy what you like, so take time to reflect."

My grandfather had perhaps a purpose in what he said, but, at any rate, I did reflect, and, like Lafontaine's *laitière*, only hesitated between the acquisition of a palace and the purchase of a farm! and all for sixty francs! At first a vision of a gun came across me—a gun with which I might kill rabbits and waterfowl; but then I remembered that I had one already, and I asked myself if it would not be a good thing to invest in fishing paraphernalia; then I thought of a ship—a fine ship, painted green and yellow, which should do wonders in the river close by. And then I remembered that I had seen at the bookseller's some handsome volumes bound in morocco, with gilt leaves, which no doubt were storehouses of delight. The gun, fishing-tackle, and ship each received their due share of attention, but the books carried the day, and I had just arrived at a decision in their favour when I espied a little blue flame dancing up out of the wood. The flame while I gazed got larger and larger, and at last lit up the whole hall. I shut my eyes, dazzled and wondering, and when I opened them, there before me I saw a young girl, whose beauty drew from me a cry of admiration. If you wish to know what she was like, think of your youngest sister at fifteen, with dreamy eyes and pure, candid brow; look at the portrait of your mother at eighteen, the soft melancholy of whose face seems dimly to shadow forth the grief and anxiety you have so often caused her. The young girl had golden hair, blue eyes, and a little, white, delicate hand that one would have liked to pass the day in kissing. She was dressed in white, and wore on her head a wreath of cornflowers and daisies which scented the air around her. She advanced to me smilingly, and put her white hand on my shoulder. "I am the fairy of Christmas," said she, "and I bring to children playthings much more beautiful than any they can buy." I stared at her in astonishment. "And, since I am a fairy," pursued she, "I know everything. I have seen your hesitation, and I am come to advise you. Will you accompany me?" "Yes, yes," cried I, with enthusiasm. "Come then," returned she, "we are going to midnight mass."

I took my cap and cloak and followed her across the corridors to the door of the château, which opened noiselessly on its hinges. In the court the big old watch-dog Ebony allowed us to pass without a growl.

As I have said, the ground was covered with a thick layer of snow, and the trees were so loaded that they resembled the crystallised sugar forests made by the confectioners for New-Year's Day. But it was not cold; the fairy seemed to dispense warmth around her, and the winter wind, no doubt at sight of her, went and hid itself in the thick forests which served it for shelter in fine weather. The snow softened under our feet, and the moon lighted us overhead.

We took the path to the village, which was about half a league off; but we went quickly, and soon arrived at the first few habitations. These were nothing but straw cabins, and in them dwelt poor labourers, who had trouble enough to gain their winter's bread.

"Mass has not yet begun," said the little fairy; "let us go in and see Père Jean. There is a light in his window."

Père Jean was an old soldier who had served under my grandfather, and who had but one leg. He was poor, and lived by plaiting willow baskets and mending the rush chairs of the villagers. He had one daughter, a good and amiable young girl, whom God had given him, like the Antigone of *Œdipus*, or the Malvina of *Fingal*, to be a prop to his old age. This girl worked in the fields.

We entered the cabin—the fairy invisible to all but me. Père Jean was in bed and ill. Winter was a bad time for him, and now the stump of his leg often pained him, and his old wounds opened, and he was sometimes whole months without being able to work. He had now been in bed three weeks. "Look about you and reflect," whispered the fairy.

I did look, and saw that on the table, in place of wine, was a pitcher of cold water; that on the hearth there were but a few sticks, and in the cupboard only two or three crusts of black bread. I had still in my hand my three gold pieces. I looked at them fortively, and saw shine on one the effigy of Napoleon. I put it into the hand of the old soldier, who wept out his thanks and gratitude.

"Come," said the fairy.

I followed her, and we found that mass had not yet begun, and that close by the church was another cabin with a light in it.

"Knock, and let us go in," said the fairy.

It was the hut of Martha, the widow, a poor woman whose husband, a chamois-hunter, had been killed in a ravine the year before, leaving five children, a small field, and a cottage which

seemed to them now very large and very empty. The villagers, pitying the distress of the widow, had agreed amongst them to take it in turns to cultivate her field. But it had been a bad year, the crop of potatoes had fallen short, and she was as very poor. We found Martha seated at her scanty fire, surrounded by her little children, who were all dressed in their new worn-out Sunday frocks in order to do honour to the birth of the child God. While waiting, they were devouring a black wheaten galette, of which the poor children offered me a slice, just as I shared my bread and jam and my toys with them when they came up to the château.

"They will have no Christmas playthings," whispered the fairy.

I opened my hand once more, and considered my second gold piece. It bore the stamp of Louis XVI., and, as I looked, a thousand instances of his kindly charity rushed into my mind, having been related to me, during the long winter evenings, by my grandfather, who had been in the household. I let fall my louis into the lap of Rose, the youngest of the widow's children. At this moment the first stroke of midnight sounded.

"Let us go to the church," said the fairy, with a smile.

When we entered, the tapers were all alight, and the altar was dressed in its whitest and finest cloth. The fairy, instead of allowing me to occupy my accustomed place, drew me towards the sacristy, where the Curé was about putting on the chasuble destined for solemn days. He was a good old priest, acting up to what he preached—the father of the fatherless, the consoler of all. He had christened me, taught me my catechism, and my first Latin. "Ask him," said the fairy, in a low voice, "why, on this Christmas Eve, he wears such an old soutane."

"Mon-sieur le Curé," said I, "did not grandfather give you last month a little money, saying it was for a new soutane?"

"Yes, my child," answered the pastor with simplicity; "but the next day, you know, Marguerite—little Marguerite—was to marry Pierre, the shepherd; and as she had no gown in which to be married, I—well, I thought, you know, that my soutane, old as it was, would last me very well till Easter."

For the third time I opened my hand, and examined by last gold piece. This time it bore the effigy of Charles X. I remembered that some days before I had seen my grandfather shed tears while reading the *Quotidienne*, and that when I asked him why he cried, he replied, "I am weeping for my King who has died in exile." Charles X was dead.

"Mon-sieur le Curé," said I, in a coaxing tone, "you know that grandpapa always comes to mass every year on St. Charles's Day in his very best coat. This year there will be a mass for the dead on that day, and I am sure grandpapa would be sorry to see you perform it in an old soutane. Would you, then, let me lend you these twenty francs, and if that is not enough I will ask for some more, and you can give it me back by-and-by, when your poor people have all that they require."

The old priest took me in his arms, and said, "May God bless you, my child, as I bless you!" I looked round proudly for the little fairy, but she had disappeared.

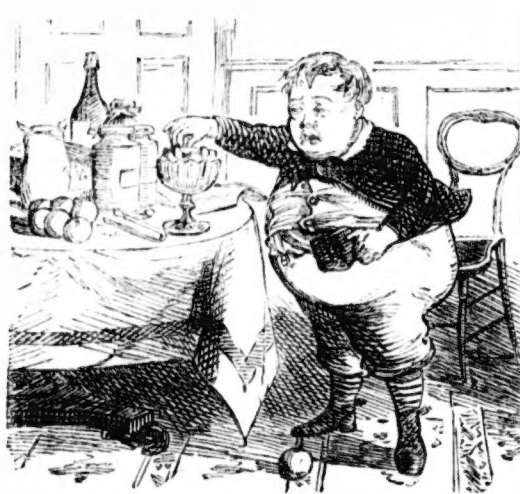
When the next Christmas came I was at college, and had bid a reluctant "Good-by!" to the happy winter evenings at the château, my grandfather's tales, and the easy lessons of the indulgent old Curé. We had just returned from midnight mass, celebrated in the chapel of the college, and had mounted, sad and cold, into our *dortoir*. On my bed I found a little purse, in which were three gold pieces, my grandfather's annual gift. "Alas!" I said to myself, turning them over in my hand, "I am far from the village, and, besides, Père Jean is dead, and the Curé's soutane cannot be worn out yet, and grandpapa will give presents to Martha's children. What am I to do with these gold pieces? I have got a gun, and a ship; and as for books, I have more than I want, and some of them not very interesting ones." Again I looked at the purse. "Little fairy," I murmured, "why don't you come and help me?" As I spoke, the fairy of Christmas appeared before me. She took me by the hand, and, invisible to my companions, led me through the dormitory and into the school-room. There, at his desk, writing, late as it was, I perceived Armand, my best friend. He was fourteen years old, but grave and rather sad—too much so for his age. He seldom played, and never laughed; but he was very studious, and his comrades both respected and loved him. Our fathers had been friends and comrades in more than one engagement; both were dead, and we boys continued the friendship; Armand, the elder, being my aid and protector in my college difficulties. The fairy led me to his side and pointed to the letter he was writing. "Read," said she. I leant over, held my breath, and read:—

"My dear little S-ster,—I write to you very sadly to day, for it is Christmas, and children all wish expect nice presents at this time. But, alas! I have nothing to send you, poor little thing! You know that our mother has had trouble enough since papa's death to pay for my school, and she has been unable to send me any pocket-money this year. My little sister, I am heartbroken when I think that I cannot make you a present such as most brothers are able to make to their sisters. But, only have patience, and when I am an officer like our father, I shall have plenty of money, and then"—I waited to read no more, but threw my arms round Armand. "Here," said I, "a day will come when we shall both be officers, and can share with each other; meantime take the half of my Christmas-box for your little sister." The tears came into Armand's eyes, and the little fairy took my hand, gave me a kiss on the forehead, and disappeared.

Many years had passed, and I had never seen the little fairy. My grandfather slept his last sleep under the cypresses of my native village. I was a man, and already had had my share of the world's troubles, when one Christmas Eve found me on the Boulevards of Paris. It was bitterly cold, and the wind and rain struggled for mastery; I was hastening on, wrapped in my palatote, my hand in my pocket, in which were no longer my grandfather's three louis, but a few gold pieces—my earnings. I arrived at a fashionable restaurant, all gold and glitter, and brilliantly illumined; sounds of voices and joyous laughter issued from it—it was one of those houses that are kept open all night, from Christmas to the Carnival. At the door was a poor ragged woman, begging, with an infant in her shivering arms. "In the name of God, Monsieur," she cried, "have pity on me, I am starving, and my child is half frozen to death!" I hesitated for a moment—for a moment was tempted to change the poor creature's distress into joy; but, as I have told you, life had not been all sunshine to me; I had found men hard and false, and gradually I had learned to shut my heart. I passed hastily in without noticing the poor beggar woman, went up stairs, and, guided by the laughter, found my way to a salon. Here, seated round a splendid supper-table, were various friends and acquaintances—men, like myself, a little saddened by the world, and who, like myself, felt it sometimes necessary to forget. I took my place, and held my glass often and again for the sparkling *Aï*, which, as it flowed, brought fresh merriment and louder laughter. When we left the restaurant at the dawn of day the woman was no longer at the door, and then I thought of her heartrending tones, of her thin hand held out to me with such a beseeching look. Full of remorse, and with a fevered brow, I arrived at home. The lamp had just gone out, but my fire burned still, and my dog was asleep before it. On the hearth, and by the uncertain light of the dying wood-ashes, I saw a form bent, as if in grief. I heard its short and sobbing breath. Nervous and shivering, I asked who was there? The white form rose slowly, and I recognised the fairy of Christmas. Not, however, fresh and beautiful, and candid, as she had appeared to me twice before; but now like a sad and dying young girl. She was in tears, with a pale face and white lips—a phantom! "Fairy," cried I, "is it you?" "I am the fairy of Christmas no longer," answered she, sadly; "you have killed me. Unfortunate; and I will now tell you my real name before I die." And then I watched her melt, little by little, into a bluish flame, such as that which had originally given her birth. This flame first illumined the chamber, and then gradually sunk and expired. At that moment an agonised and sobbing voice broke the silence and said, "I am no more, and I was your youth!" Children who read my story, learn to be open-handed! "Give without ceasing and without tiring! Youth only leaves us when we shut our hearts!"

B. J.

THE SWEETS OF HOME AND THEIR EFFECT ON MASTER BANTING. DRAWN—BY M'CONNELL.



Master Banting home for the holidays. Pays such frequent visits to the sugar-basin, and indulges so largely in the good things of the season that his clothes become unpleasantly tight for him.



He has to come down stairs cautiously, and backwards.



Tying his shoe he finds an impossibility.



He is refused accommodation, and insulted, by the drivers of public vehicles.



Is overcome with the slightest extra exertion; even the first figure of a quadrille prostrates him.



Determined to check his parasite, he goes through a course of gymnastic exercises.



Secures the services of an experienced trainer.



Tries the Indian clubs and the dumb-bells; but without effect.



A fortuitous circumstance induces him to consult "Harvey on Corpulence."



Following Harvey's advice, he finds a material difference in his weight and —



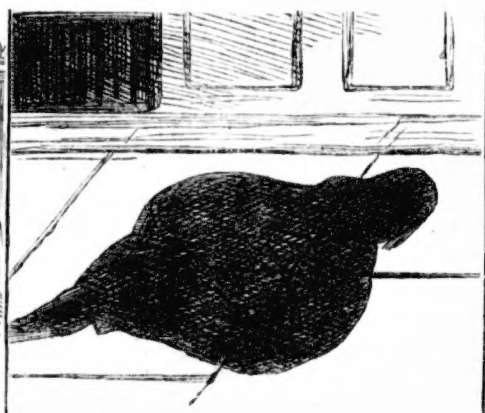
Breathing.



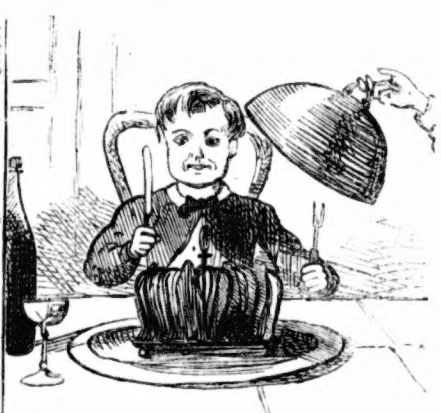
Visiting the Cattle Show, a sympathetic feeling prompts him to relate his experiences; but he finds his object unappreciated or misunderstood.



About this time he finds a visible diminution in his bulk.



He was lucky enough to secure a tracing of his shadow before and after his course of Harvey.



His appetite improves, and he has an extra round of toast for his Christmas dinner.



Reduced to genteel proportions, he goes, in high spirits, to a party on Twelfth Night.



Where, overcome by the fascinations of his fair partners and the twelfth-cake, he breaks through his prescribed diet.



and leaves the party a wiser but a fatter boy.